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Irving Howe: the late, great 'Jewish Daily Forward'

Right-wing women • Medicine men • Erich Heller on Thomas Mann

THE NEW REPUBLIC

BAILING OUT THE BIG MONEY BOYS

The campaign to rescue OPEC

Charles Krauthammer

The worldwide banking ripoff

William J. Quirk

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NEWSPAPER

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CORRESPONDENCE

LAURELS FOR LERNER

To the editors:
Your splendid tribute to Max Lerner at 80 was true and wise (TNR, January 10 & 17). Even though, as you well say, the academic world has never contained him, he still has not abandoned it. After teaching at Harvard and Williams and Sarah Lawrence and Brandeis and U.S. International University, he is now the Welch Professor of American Studies at Notre Dame. Our American Studies students—and his faculty colleagues—would ask you to add one more laurel leaf to your tribute: Max Lerner is also a great teacher.

DONALD P. COSTELLO
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

HE'S THE TIP

To the editors:
I enjoyed your recent cover story on Speaker O'Neill ("The Life of the Party," by Jack Beatty, TNR, January 24). However, in the interest of accuracy, your readers should know that neither the reported conversation between my former boss and the Speaker after the first fireside chat nor the supposed conversation between the Speaker and me ever took place. I don't know who Mr. Beatty's source was, but I'm quite certain it wasn't Speaker O'Neill.

JODY POWELL
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:
Thank you for the lovely piece on Tip O'Neill. Most of your articles inform or provoke. This one made me feel good.

JOSEPH BARBATO
Elmhurst, New York

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE

To the editors:
Since the beginning of the Reagan Administration nearly two years ago, trendy leftists have been saying that the Administration would certify human rights improvements in Chile "momentarily," "shortly," or "very soon." Two years later, the Administration has still not certified human rights improvements in Chile. But those who have been wrong for two years go on giving the public their assurances, for the facts obviously don't matter to them.

Jan Knippers Black ("Chile Diarist," TNR, January 10) went even further and stated that "the Reagan Administration . . . is trying to persuade Congress that human rights in Chile are now secure. . . ." This statement is false, as a glance at the State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1982* would show. Our human rights policy with regard to Chile may certainly be criticized, and has been: both by those who think that there have been improvements and that certification is now called for, and by those who think we should exert more pressure on Chile for human rights improvements. But Professor Black's statement that the Reagan Administration believes human rights in Chile are now "secure" is flatly false. If Professor Black does not like our human rights policy toward Chile, she should simply say so, rather than misrepresenting it and misinforming your readers.

ELLIOTT ABRAMS
Assistant Secretary of State for
Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
Washington, D.C.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

To the editors:
We still had eight million people unemployed in 1941 after years of government spending to provide jobs. From this the conclusion has been widely drawn that Keynesian economics is wrong by advocating such spending during those periods when the private sector is not creating adequate demand.

That this conclusion is wrong is cogently pointed out by Paul A. London ("An Economic Allegory," TNR, January 31). As London tells us, the reason we weren't more successful is because we didn't spend enough money fast enough. As soon as World War II removed our restraints on such spending, we quickly got out of the Depression and moved into a period of full employment.

I am not as sanguine about our being able to do this now, without a return to inflation, as is London. The reason price rises were kept in check during World War II was because of the stabilization program that was imposed. Mandatory wage and price controls made it possible to hold down price increases during a period when they would otherwise have skyrocketed. Prior to the application of controls, the cost of living rose by 9.7 percent in 1941 and 9.3 percent in 1942. After controls were imposed the annual increases were only 3.2 percent in 1943 and 2.1 percent in 1944. As was to be expected, prices shot up when controls were removed—by 18.2 percent in 1945.

If we are to get out of the present recession, the government must spend billions to put people to work. Large oligopolies that administer prices account for almost one-half of our gross national product. They will raise prices if demand starts to pick up, so we must apply mandatory wage and price controls to this segment of the economy as was done in World War II.

Whether we shall ever learn (and put into practice) what our experience in the 1930s should have taught us seems doubtful. It seems more likely that government efforts to deal with the serious problems that now confront us will be too weak and too late to do the job.

JOHN C. DAVIS
Former chief economist,
Council of Economic Advisers
New Port Richey, Florida

To the editors:
Paul A. London's suggestions make interesting economic sense. Unhappily, he has neglected to examine his ideas from a sociological perspective, and that is why the scheme breaks down.

In 1941 America entered a war in which the population of the country united behind a great President in a crusade to defeat Fascism and restore the economy, the latter a spinoff of the former. What about 1983? Would Americans unite behind Mr. Reagan—or even Mr. Mondale—today in the same sort of program without the higher motivation of a great crusade of other ideals?

My suggestion is that it would not, and further that the financial institutions of America would fail to do their part simply because they would follow whatever conventional wisdoms finance people believe in under those conditions. Regardless of the economic merits of Mr. London's proposal, human nature would assure its ultimate failure.

ROBERT A. RAMSAY
Arcadia, California

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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FROM WASHINGTON

Eroding Banks

There are two schools of economic thought here in Washington. One thinks we may be headed for an economic disaster; the other doesn't. And then there is the great mass of complaining and anxious people who don't think in apocalyptic terms at all. They see that there are more beggars on the streets, and that we are in the worst recession since 1930.

It began far away, across the seas. The oil exporting countries organized a cartel; they quadrupled prices and got so much money from the first and second "oil shocks" that they couldn't spend it (amazing though that sounds), and put it into banks. At the same time a lot of less developed countries without oil decided they would borrow money to industrialize and catch up with the rich countries. These two developments—the influx of funds in the rich countries' banks, and the third world demand for loans—went smoothly and had a nice name: the recycling of petrodollars. But then the global oil demand subsided, the OPEC oil producers began to cut the price, and now the cartel is collapsing.

Okay, fine; cheaper oil. But how about those loans made by American and other banks? Our busy news weeklies have been investigating the matter. "Never in history have so many nations owed so much money with so little promise of repayment," says *Time*. The story says that "altogether the nine largest U.S. banks have loaned out about 130 percent of their equity to Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina." *Newsweek* says of Mexico, Nigeria, Venezuela, and other debt-ridden third world nations dependent on oil exports: "Should their revenues plummet they might well sink into bankruptcy—and take a number of overextended international banks down with them."

So what? we ask. Who loves banks? Who loves overextended nations? Who loves debtors who can't pay? Nobody does—except your bank and my bank and any small bank on Main Street. Their investments have gone to New York, and Wall Street is deeply committed to the international loan business. Experts take turns telling us what it means. Here's white-haired Henry H. Fowler, Treasury Secretary under L.B.J., now chairman of Goldman Sachs: "Without being alarmist," he told Senator Charles Mathias's banking subcommittee, "it is fair to state that the U.S. and the free world economy, of which it is the key component, face the most serious web of interrelated international economic and financial problems since the disastrous early 1930s led to extended worldwide depression and World War II."

The public isn't listening, but witnesses keep on saying it. Some think the threat will go away. This is the time of annual account-taking in Washington. Reagan has given his State of the Union and budget messages, along with the annual economic report, and now comes the appearance before Congress of Federal Reserve Board chairman Paul Volcker. A year ago Reagan was smugly telling the nation how fine things were: "The appropriate ways of reducing the deficit will be working in our favor in 1982. . . ." His policies, he said, would provide "a vigorous economic recovery this year. . . . The private sector works best when the federal government intervenes least." He praised the Federal Reserve System.

It hasn't worked out that way. Reporters are punch-drunk with all the statistics they got from the White House last week, but the general impression is that the Administration is in trouble, serious trouble, and that economic improvement is about all that can cure it. Some respected economists see that improvement now developing: in increased housing starts, lower inflation, the higher stock market. At the same time the pressure for federal intervention may be growing. Officials don't want to talk about a possible full-scale global financial crisis. I listened to M.I.T. economist Lester Thurow testify bluntly last week before the House Committee on Education and Labor, in a room with a forty-foot ceiling and a silver, snake-like mike coiled up to him: "The current economic disaster is not necessary. America had six recessions between World War II and the current depression. They averaged only eleven months in duration, and the longest was sixteen months. In each and every case recovery was rapid. . . . Quick, vigorous recoveries did not happen by accident. Whenever government spotted a recession, it rushed to the rescue with lower interest rates, fiscal stimulus, jobs programs, and extended unemployment insurance benefits. This time government has done none of those things and with its failure to do so has turned what could have been a normal recession into a worldwide economic shutdown."

Well, perhaps a lot of people would put it more mildly. Nevertheless, like Hoover after 1929, Reagan has been reluctant to give government aid. A bigger test may lie just ahead. If a couple of foreign governments on the world's money market default, the average American will finally learn that the present crisis is worldwide.

Maybe it won't happen. But if the world debt-bomb threat ticks closer, will Reagan intervene or cling to his comfortable, doctrinaire, simplistic philosophy? Who knows? Who but Reagan could have believed that he could cut taxes, raise defense costs, and balance the budget, all at the same time?

Thurow declared positively last week that with present interest rates imposed by the Fed, "no sustained economic recovery is possible." The idea has certainly crossed other minds. Bankers, of course, profess to be unworried, and last September the President was assuring representatives of the International Monetary Fund that the "magic of the marketplace" would take care of the international debt problem. At that time the United States stood alone against other capitalist countries in opposing enlargement of I.M.F. funds to bail out troubled banks—and nations. But now Treasury Secretary Donald Regan says the Administration favors increasing I.M.F.'s loan resources "as soon as possible."

Hoover didn't want government intervention either. But now Reagan must decide about a jobs program, federal support for an ailing economy, and possible diversion of of taxpayers' money to bail out banks abroad.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 21, 1983

A CRISIS RETIRED

The National Commission on Social Security Reform has rendered a service that can hardly be exaggerated. It took on a life of its own and came up with a genuine solution to a politically explosive and substantively perplexing problem. In the world of blue-ribbon commissions, this is a rare and happy thing.

The consensus report was signed by twelve of the fifteen commissioners. The three dissenters—former Representative Joe Waggonner, Democrat of Louisiana; Representative William Archer, Republican of Texas; and Senator William Armstrong, Republican of Colorado—were isolated on the commission's extreme right. The package which emerged, and which has been endorsed by the President and the leaders of both houses of Congress, not only stabilizes Social Security fiscally but also improves its equity, in both financing and benefits. The payroll tax is to be raised. But by exempting the money that employees pay in payroll taxes from taxable income, the plan ensures that most nonwealthy wage earners won't actually pay additional taxes. Similarly, the plan subjects half of Social Security benefits to income taxes, but only for the 10 percent of retirees whose annual incomes exceed $20,000 ($25,000 for couples). This approach slightly reduces benefits only for those who are least dependent on Social Security, and it does so without sacrificing the key principle of universality.

The plan's proposed six-month freeze on cost-of-living benefit adjustments seems reasonable, particularly in a year when the rise in the cost of living is unlikely to exceed 5 percent. Ideally, Congress should raise Supplemental Security Income benefits for the neediest so that they are in effect exempted from the freeze. And Congress should also remedy the commission's failure to allow retirees to have outside earnings from work without losing Social Security benefits. (Earnings from investments are already treated this way.) If these things can be done without endangering the whole package, then they ought to be done.

The equity of the commission's solution makes for a striking contrast with virtually every other legislative initiative of the Reagan years. It should serve as a model of belt-tightening by those with the most ample belts. And even more important than the equity of the fiscal formula is the political victory for Social Security itself. The fifteen commissioners agreed unanimously "that the Congress, in its deliberations on financing proposals, should not alter the fundamental structure of the Social Security program or undermine its fundamental principles." Coming from a commission appointed by a President who is on record as saying that Social Security should be made voluntary, that is a remarkable declaration. David Stockman, the scourge of entitlements, and Martin Feldstein, nemesis of the welfare state, can hardly be pleased with the outcome.

Congress, of course, must still act before the recommendations become law. For the ultras to Mr. Reagan's right, the salvaging of Social Security is one more act of betrayal. They will fight the plan. The American Association of Retired Persons is gearing up its 14 million members to oppose any taxation of benefits, proposing more new payroll taxes instead. They should desist. The nation's pensioners did far better under the plan than almost anyone could have predicted. The principle of cost-of-living adjustments has been maintained, and only the wealthiest of the retired will pay income taxes on their benefits. Under the compromise plan, newly hired federal workers will be brought under Social

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Security. This is the least that fairness requires, and federal employees, who are already everybody's favorite scapegoats, shouldn't press their luck by opposing it. They will, after all, continue to enjoy a supplemental pension package that is far more generous than most private plans. Commissioner Lane Kirkland filed a polite ritual dissent to this provision, but he signed the broad package, and the word is that he will not go to the mat for his federal employees. Nor should he.

President Reagan stayed as far away from the commission as he could until the very last moment. The credit really belongs to the commission's leaders: its chairman, Alan Greenspan, its executive director, Robert Myers, former Social Security commissioner Robert Ball, Senator Bob Dole, and Representative Claude Pepper. All of them, as Mr. Reagan pointed out in his State of the Union address, gave up something to save the system. It is axiomatic that at the bill-signing ceremony, and in the 1984 electioneering, Mr. Reagan will portray himself as the man who saved Social Security. The system has indeed been saved—but only because Social Security proved to be stronger than Mr. Reagan himself.

Korean Query

Remember Koreagate, the influence-buying scandal in which the government of the Republic of Korea was found to have distributed more than $850,000 in payoffs to members of Congress? Throughout the scandal, even after the full extent of the South Korean abuses had come to light, the Korean government found no more passionate an advocate than Representative Ed Derwinski, Republican of Illinois. Last year Mr. Derwinski was defeated in his bid for a thirteenth term in the House. Now President Reagan has announced his intention to nominate him as counselor of the State Department, the seventh most important post in the American diplomatic hierarchy.

In March 1977, as the ranking minority member on Representative Donald Fraser's International Organizations Subcommittee, Mr. Derwinski tried to block funds for a stepped-up investigation into the Korean payoffs on the Hill. He wanted the investigation stopped, he said, "because I don't think the Korean style of diplomacy is all that different from other countries. . . . The Koreans have been rather ham-handed about it, evidently. But we have enough other issues to worry about." A few months later Tongsun Park, man about town and K.C.I.A. agent, was indicted on conspiracy and bribery charges. He chose to flee the country rather than face trial. Twenty-four Congressmen were eventually implicated in the bribe-taking, including Representatives Richard Hanna of California ($200,000), Otto Passman of Louisiana ($213,000), and Cornelius Gallagher of New Jersey ($60,000).

Mr. Derwinski was not among the bribe-takers. But his efforts to protect his Korean friends seem to have gone beyond mere words. In September 1977 investigators for the Fraser Committee learned that the K.C.I.A. station chief in New York, Sohn Ho Young, wanted to defect to the U.S. and testify before the committee. When Mr. Derwinski (a recipient of the Gwangha Medal, the South Korean Order of Diplomatic Service Merit) was briefed about the possibility, he reportedly passed the knowledge on to a South Korean embassy official in a phone call intercepted by American intelligence gatherers. Informed of Mr. Derwinski's leak, F.B.I. agents beat K.C.I.A. operatives to Mr. Sohn's suburban New York home by half an hour, and the defector was whisked to safety.

DID MR. DERWINSKI in fact tip off the K.C.I.A.? A federal grand jury that looked into the possibility of wrongdoing handed down no indictment. But this does not necessarily mean that Mr. Derwinski didn't make the phone call. His attorneys sidestepped the question by invoking the "speech and debate" clause of the Constitution, which assures members of Congress immunity from prosecution for actions related to their official duties. And, according to participants in the investigation, it was the nature, not the substance, of the evidence against Mr. Derwinski that ruled out an indictment: the U.S. government could hardly admit that it was tapping South Korean Embassy phone lines. Instead, the grand jury took the unusual action of providing a secret report on Derwinski's role to a D.C. District Court judge, a document immediately put under court seal.

Mr. Derwinski contends that there is no truth to the allegation that he tipped off the K.C.I.A. on Mr. Sohn's defection. (He does admit that he may have called the Korean Embassy on the day in question, saying that he did so "dozens of times" in the course of his official duties.) And, even in the aftermath of Koreagate, he continues to maintain that the South Korean government was guilty of no wrongdoing. "The investigation was a waste of the taxpayers' money," he says. "The South Korean government has only conducted itself as other foreign governments do in their lobbying activities." (If Mr. Derwinski has evidence that other nations are passing out cash-stuffed envelopes on Capitol Hill, he might want to share such information with the F.B.I.)

Mr. Derwinski is certainly not the worst imaginable candidate for counselor of the Reagan State Department. Apart from his obsession with Korea, he is a routine Reagan conservative. His politics, in any case, are not the issue. If the White House is serious about going ahead with his nomination, it has a clear responsibility to investigate independently the allegations in the Sohn case. If the findings show complicity, the appointment should not be made; and if it is made, it should not be confirmed by the Senate.

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NOTEBOOK

□ MORRIS UDALL ONCE SAID of Interior Secretary James Watt that his idea of wilderness is a parking lot without yellow lines. Apparently Mr. Watt also has trouble with other nouns, like Nazism and socialism. In an interview in the January 24 issue of *Business Week*, he waxed historical about what the forces behind the environmental movement could evolve into. "Look what happened to Germany in the 1930s," he said. "The dignity of man was subordinated to the powers of Nazism. . . ." On socialism, Mr. Watt's pronouncement was less indirect. "If you want an example of the failures of socialism," he said, "don't go to Russia. Come to America, and see the American Indian reservations." What to do about Mr. W? Gaylord Nelson, chairman of the Wilderness Society, suggests, "It is time the white-coat people took him away." But Mr. Nelson's solution would unnecessarily stretch an already strained social safety (or butterfly) net. These are tough economic times. We suggest a more economically—and ecologically—sound solution: let the forest rangers take him away, and leave him in a picnic basket in Yellowstone Park. For bears recycling comes naturally.

□ NOW THAT POLAND seldom claims the attention of our daily newspapers, where is one to turn for reliable information on what is happening in that country? Our place is *Poland Watch*, a new quarterly published here in Washington (1901 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20009). The first issue carries articles on the dramatic developments preceding Jaruzelski's *putsch*, and the forms of resistance (both passive and active) worked out by Solidarity during the year of martial law; on the feverish activities of the police; on conditions in detention camps; and on the uneven political course of the Catholic Church (a conciliatory primate facing a rebellious clergy). The editor, Jane Cave, a British scholar and former analyst for the BBC, says that the next issue will be largely devoted to a survey of events following the bogus "suspension" of martial law last December. *Poland Watch* is serious, eminently readable, filled with valuable insights, and impeccably documented. We wish it good luck.

□ THIRTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "I, for one, am prepared to give this business administration my heartiest support—so long as it works faithfully for the public interest. But history warns us, I think, that government by a single group, no matter how high-minded and patriotic it may be, exposes government to genuine dangers. There is always the tendency to mistake the particular interest for the general interest—to suppose, in the immortal thought recently uttered before a committee of Congress, that what is good for General Motors is good for the country. There is always the possibility that the successor of the New Deal will turn out (after the fine words have faded away) to be the Big Deal, while the New Dealers have all left Washington to make way for the car dealers. I hasten to say that I do not believe the story that the general welfare has become a subsidiary of General Motors." ("Constructive Opposition," by Adlai Stevenson, TNR, February 23, 1953.)

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

GAG LINES

THE REPORTS OF THE Reagan Administration's collapse were premature. Even as *The New York Times* was sniffing "the stench of failure" around the White House last month and a *Wall Street Journal* writer was detecting "a whiff of panic," steps were being taken to sweeten these odors. One action—a temporary expedient, one hopes—was the issuance of new White House press guidelines requiring aides to get clearance from the Office of Communications director David Gergen before granting interviews, and encouraging those who are authorized to talk to do so on the record. The guidelines, which were drafted in response to a spate of leaks about the budget and intramural White House conflict, came down on January 10, the day after the *Los Angeles Times* ran a last-straw story headlined: REAGAN AIDES FRUSTRATED BY HIS RIGIDITY. Reporters denounce the guidelines as a "gag order," and there is no question that some aides have been prevented from talking, which inhibits the press' ability to find out what is going on.

Evidently there really was a twinge of panic at the White House, if not a feeling of failure, when the guidelines were issued. As one authorized talker described the mood (speaking, ironically, not for attribution), "There was concern that if we didn't get the situation solved, the bottom might drop out, and that we had to stanch the flow of blood. Besides pulling ourselves together, there were the press guidelines. The funny thing is that during the period of 'disarray' stories, real progress was being made on the budget and Social Security, but we couldn't talk about it for fear of blowing the whole thing. So we put a clamp on some of these jokers who didn't know what was going on but were talking to the press anyway. We had a couple of frustrated individuals around here. We had some idea who they were, but we couldn't be absolutely certain, and rather than starting a witch-hunt inside, it would be better to start having everybody handle this a different way."

The White House has been more than generous about

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making authorized spokespersons available since the guidelines came down, and Gergen aide Joanna Bistany has efficiently held the "turnaround time" for answering interview requests to an hour or two. Still, those denied permission are by no means all "jokers" who don't know what's going on. Some know very well, but tend to say more—and say it more colorfully—than the reigning White House establishment thinks serves its public relations goals. The press is being fed amply enough to get fat, but the diet consists of Purina Dog Chow rather than red meat.

Now it's time for the White House to lift its gag order because its moment of crisis is over and genuine good news has started rolling in. A compromise has been worked out on Social Security that satisfies main-line leaders of both parties, though not right-wing Republicans and the federal employee unions. For the Reagan White House, the compromise is a major gain because it demonstrates competence in governing, it takes a partisan issue away from the Democrats, and its terms ($40 billion in taxes and $40 billion in benefit adjustments) were within Reagan's original negotiating guidelines. Another success is the Administration's ability to produce a budget that will not be rejected out of hand by Congress, as last year's was, and whose economic assumptions are regarded as credible, even a little pessimistic, by the public and the financial community. The leading economic indicators took a decisive turn upward in the latest reports, and General Motors began rehiring laid-off workers. And finally, a new détente seems to have taken hold inside the White House staff, partly as a result of necessity—the knowledge that President Reagan was not going to fire anybody and that everybody had to live together—and partly out of a genuine rekindling of respect on the part of some people on chief of staff James Baker's operations side of the house for those on counselor Edwin Meese's policy side.

This week the Reagan White House is optimistic enough to think that the economy might really come out of its hole. Top aides again are expressing the conviction that the President will run for re-election, and some of them say he may announce his plans ahead of the previously reported June-to-September time frame.

Yet another White House success—no smash, but a solid accomplishment—was a State of the Union address that managed to mollify Administration opponents and skeptics while giving up next to nothing of the President's most cherished principles. The speech set a tone of commitment to bipartisanship, fairness, and forward-looking initiative, but it gave little on taxes and defense, and cleverly disguised new domestic spending reductions in an overall federal spending freeze. The speech drew complaints from the right wing for sounding no call to a renewed crusade against government, but as one top official put it, "Even if the standby tax goes into effect in 1986, taxes will account for only 20.6 percent of G.N.P., which is exactly what Reagan called for in his September 1980 campaign speech in Chicago. The American people will have paid $600 billion less in taxes over a ten-year period than they would have if the President's cuts hadn't gone into effect." Other officials noted that defense outlays will rise next year by 9 percent (vs. the 5 percent that Reagan called for in the campaign), and that domestic spending, already slashed by $50 billion since 1981, will be cut another 4 percent.

The process of putting this State of the Union address together seems to symbolize the new détente prevailing in the White House staff. This good feeling seems not to be universal, though. If it were, Gergen's office would permit speechwriter Anthony Dolan to confirm or deny a report by *New York Times* columnist William Safire that a proposed State of the Union draft by Dolan got to the President only after Dolan "protested angrily about a 'willful band' isolating Mr. Reagan." Officially, the White House says that Dolan sought and received Gergen's permission to write a "conservative version of the State of the Union," that Dolan submitted his draft to Aram Bakshian, chief of the speechwriting office; that Bakshian sent Dolan's draft to deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver along with his own "official draft"; that the Dolan draft duly went to the President, that it was "long and rhetorical," and that none of it made it into the

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RIGHT!
TELL THEM EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL! TELL THEM THIS ADMINISTRATION IS HUMMING ALONG LIKE A WELL-OILED MACHINE! TELL THEM I AM IN COMMAND!!
NOW--UH--TELL ME YOUR NAME AGAIN...?
RIGHT! GOT IT!!
BEN SARGENT

CARTOON BY BEN SARGENT

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President's final address. None of this can be checked with Dolan because he has been gagged. And he is far from the only one.

It is true, though, as Safire reports, that President Reagan himself chose "the themeless pudding" (that's Safire's characterization) drafted by Bakshian as opposed to Dolan's call to arms. In fact, the President himself reportedly selected its message of bipartisanship on December 23, at his first meeting with the State of the Union working group headed by Deaver. "Every time he found a place in a draft talking about responsibility or blame for what happened in the past," one aide said, "he softened it or took it out. He kept saying, 'We've made that point.' "

The Deaver group contained representatives of all the key domains in the White House staff. James Baker was not present at initial meetings in December, because he was at work on Social Security negotiations, but his top aide, Richard Darman, did attend. The key representative from Meese's policy side was Edwin Harper, head of the Office of Policy Development. Other members of the group were Gergen, Deaver aide Michael McManus, Congressional liaison chief Kenneth Duberstein, Joseph Wright from the Office of Management and Budget, Dennis Blair of the National Security Council, and Bakshian. As the January 25 delivery date approached, subordinate officials tended to be replaced by their bosses.

AT THE FIRST MEETING of the Deaver group in December, members were assigned to draft theme and policy suggestions for the message. On December 23, six such papers were handed to Bakshian, along with a synthesis written by Darman. According to Bakshian, "the State of the Union is the most comprehensive speech a President gives, involving the most interaction with everybody. It has the most fact-checking and negotiating-of-priorities of any speech. On the other hand, it's the least 'speechy' because of the laundry list nature it takes on. There is less room for rhetoric, and there tends to be less and less as you try to keep it short. It's more of a paper and less of a speech, especially in a year when there are more programs to mention."

The papers given to Bakshian, which were discussed at two meetings of the Deaver group on December 23 (one with the President), established the basic themes that survived through all the multiple drafts. Besides bipartisanship, White House aides saw a need to show compassion for the poor and jobless and to blunt the image of Reagan as "unfair." They also sought to show the Administration as moving forward and to represent the present economic slump as part of a transition toward a better future. Elaboration of these themes comprised much of the first draft Bakshian composed and submitted on January 16, along with Dolan's draft, for Presidential review. Bakshian's "official draft" contained notations where inserts were to be put once final decisions were made on the 1984 budget, Social Security, and policy recommendations.

It's widely known that Baker and Darman were the chief Administration negotiators of the Social Security compromise (with Baker reporting back regularly to Reagan), and that key budget decisions were reached through a process overseen by the White House Legislative Strategy Group headed by Baker and run by Darman, along with the Tier-One group of key economic advisers joined by Secretary of State George Shultz. The L.S.G. seems most responsible for convincing Reagan that a budget showing a $200 billion deficit and calling for $30 billion in domestic budget cuts would be "dead on arrival" in Congress. Shultz seems to have helped persuade the President to accept some (albeit minor) defense cuts, and the Tier-One group developed the standby tax increase.

WHAT'S LESS WELL KNOWN is the role of Harper and his boss, Ed Meese, in developing Reagan's new policy initiatives in trade, education, health, research, and jobs policy. On taking over the O.P.D. last March, Harper got Reagan's go-ahead for a "midterm planning exercise" designed to devise proposals for the Administration's second two years. By June Harper had outlined the process and prepared instructions for federal agencies. In July he, Meese, budget director David Stockman, and Cabinet Secretary Craig Fuller met with the heads of the twenty-three largest federal agencies to review objectives and opportunities. By November, just after the election, Harper and the Cabinet councils had assembled more than one hundred options into fifty-seven issue areas for Presidential decision. On December 23, Harper presented the Deaver group with a list of initiatives approved by the President for possible inclusion in the State of the Union. The Harper-Meese policy proposals permitted Reagan to steal a thematic march on practically every proposal in the Democratic State of the Union film broadcast immediately after the President's. Democrats no doubt would be more generous about funding such initiatives, but that probably was lost on the television audience.

Descriptions of President Reagan's involvement in policy and budget decisions—and in the speechwriting process itself—do not suggest that he is as detached from the job of governing as some of his critics make out. Reagan himself, for example, is said to have written the "vision of hope" finale of the speech, including the line cheered by Democrats, that "We who are in government must take the lead in restoring the economy," and the succeeding appeal to the Federal Reserve and money markets to let up on interest rates. But then it may be that the impression of Reagan-as-activist and other White House good news comes through because it is the authorized White House "line" and only those who dependably toe that line are permitted to speak. If this isn't the case, if the news is really good, then there's every reason to lift the gags and let everybody talk.

MORTON KONDRACKE

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It's daily no more.

THE 'FORWARD' FADES

TEN YEARS AGO the *Jewish Daily Forward* was still a daily newspaper. Then it started coming out six times a week, and then by 1976, five times a week. The decline could not be hidden, though if you talked to the old Yiddishists they refused to hear of it. I think I understand their response: they would take care of their own funerals, without the help of outsiders.

The *Forward*'s drop in readership could be charted almost as precisely as if it were an actuarial table. Meanwhile, the costs of production and distribution kept rising, especially the cost of distribution. On a typical truck run in New York that might dispose of, say, 700 papers, the *Forward*—according to its manager Harold Ostroff—would be left with little if any income once the newsstand dealers and truckers got their share.

The paper turned to its readers for help. Over the last eight years there were four fund drives, bringing in over $1.3 million. In the 1980-1982 campaign some 13,000 people responded with contributions—an astonishing number when you consider that the circulation of the *Forward* is now some 20,000, just about 10 percent of what it was in the paper's heyday. But even with such generous help, the *Forward* could not make it, since weekly losses were now between $8,000 and $10,000. The result was a decision to publish only once a week, which, with luck, ought to cut the losses to a manageable $50,000 a year.

When I was growing up in New York during the 1930s, there were four Yiddish dailies: the social democratic *Forward*, the Communist *Freiheit* (Freedom), the liberal Zionist *Tog* (Day), and the conservative religious *Morgen Zhurnal* (Morning Journal). These papers represented important lines of opinion within the Yiddish world, and all of them together made for a strong and vivid subculture. Now we are left with three weeklies, all with small circulations, all written and read by aging people: the *Forward*, the still-leftist but no longer party-line *Freiheit*, and the *Algemeine Zhurnal*, which reflects the interests of religious orthodoxy and is said to be sustained by the Lubavitche Hasidim.

In recent years even a casual reader could tell that the *Forward* was in deep trouble. Many articles were poorly written and some apparently unedited; the paper read like a hodge-podge of whatever its editors could scrape together. What gave the *Forward* a certain distinction, nonetheless, was the presence of serialized novels and short stories by two major Yiddish writers, Isaac Bashevis Singer and Chaim Grade. Singer, notwithstanding his Nobel Prize and the American fame he so visibly cherished, remained faithful to the *Forward*, regularly sending it his Yiddish manuscripts. Grade, less well known in this country, was an intensely serious writer with strong emotional ties to Jewish religious traditions. But Grade died a few months ago, and there was no one to take his place. Meyer Stiker, a refined Yiddish poet who had served as the paper's city editor, recently had to quit because of illness. The labor journalist Jacob Rich, who had been writing in the *Forward* for 62 years, also had to stop—at the age of 88. Most of the present staff, stretched thin and overworked, are in their 70s. And no one younger is in sight.

The *Forward* still carried an occasional good dispatch from abroad, simply because here and there a serious Yiddish writer survives. But seldom was it able to present the scintillating (or wicked) reportage of labor, communal, and literary affairs for which it had once been famous. Seven or eight years ago, when working on *World of Our Fathers*, I interviewed a *Forward* editor and complained about some of the things that went into the paper. He sighed, "I find it easier not to read them."

Yet this drop in quality did not seem to bother the paper's readers very much, perhaps because they had learned to accept the inevitable, perhaps because all they really wanted by now was a glimpse of the printed Yiddish word.

IN ITS BEST YEARS, the first four or five decades of this century, the *Forward* was a remarkable paper. It brought a lively curiosity to every aspect of immigrant Jewish life, reporting both ideological quarrels and the habits of gangsters, literary trends (the editor, Abe Cahan, refused to budge from his banner of "realism"), and the mysteries of baseball, which Jewish parents had better try to grasp. Combining *shund* with *literatur*, the paper catered to the tastes of an immigrant generation at once ill-educated and hungry for culture. The *Forward* gave it novels by Yiddish writers like I. J. Singer and Zalman Schneour, and it gave them an East Side version of cheap journalism (though, even at its worst, it never sank to the depths of the present-day *New York Post*). And then there was the celebrated "Bintel Brief" (Bundle of Letters), mixing advice to the lovelorn, community gossip, serious moral discussion, shrewd tips on manners, and teary complaint. A shy romanticism was entering the hearts of these somewhat puritanical immigrants, and the *Forward*, through both its serious and popular fiction, knew how to reach it.

For several decades after its start in 1897, the *Forward* was a staunch advocate of socialism, reflecting the angers and yearnings of sweatshop workers. It began with the rather sterile accents of a "universalistic" radicalism, denying in Yiddish that there was any special Jewish character to its socialist outlook; but in a few years, under Abe Cahan's wily hand, it moved closer to the position of the Bundists, or Jewish Socialists from Poland, who tried to combine socialism with a commitment to Yiddish culture. All the while, the *Forward* served as spokesman, ally, and sometimes financial buttress of the Jewish garment unions.

The politics of the *Forward* has over the years thinned

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into mild liberalism, and it has largely dropped its earlier role of scourge to the bourgeois Jewish establishment. Its editors became convinced they were no longer putting out a paper that spoke for one strand of opinion within the Yiddish world; like it or not, they felt it was now their obligation to encompass a much wider range of sentiment among the remaining Yiddish readers.

Though it had long ago abandoned its anti-Zionism, the *Forward* did continue printing somewhat critical dispatches from Tel Aviv by M. Tsanin, a veteran who still wrote with something of the old *Forward* trenchancy and who did not debase the commitment to Israel by treating that country as a sort of ethnic Disneyland. After the massacres in Lebanon, Simon Weber, the *Forward*'s editor, printed two front-page editorials attacking the Begin government, and for a moment it almost seemed as if the *Forward* of half a century ago, bristling with polemical fire, were back with us.

But of course it wasn't, it couldn't be. Now, as it starts its weekly format, the paper is likely to suffer the same difficulties that beset it in recent years. Writers will go, and no new ones appear. The readership will continue to drop. After a while, the deficits will go up again.

For those who remember the vibrancy of the Yiddish immigrant world, all this is very sad. Yes, I know—change is inevitable, and there was a lot in the old immigrant world that no sensible person would want to bring back. But let us not delude ourselves: the "march of progress" Americans like to celebrate leaves behind it a trail of bloody victims. One of these is the *Forward*—let us say it once more, the *Jewish* DAILY *Forward*.

IRVING HOWE

Irving Howe is the author of *World of Our Fathers* and, more recently, *A Margin of Hope, An Intellectual Autobiography*, both published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Why we should welcome OPEC's collapse.

THE OIL BUST PANIC

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

TO LISTEN to the banks, the oil companies, and the new class of petrodollar consultants, you'd never know it was just oil prices that are about to fall. You'd think it was the sky. The doomsayers do not, of course, speak of their own interests. They speak of important-sounding things like orderly markets, price stability, and the integrity of the international banking system. And indeed order, stability, and integrity are all excellent things. But what we are really talking about here is monopoly control, high prices, and the continued flow of interest payments on the almost criminally imprudent loans banks made when they were fat with oil money.

The Saudi oil minister, Sheik Yamani, set the tone for the debate on whether the imminent collapse of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is good or bad. With characteristic chutzpah he declared: "Everybody needs OPEC, even the consumers, and we read in the various newspapers every day how important OPEC is and [how] important [it is] to keep the price of oil under control." He is right about the newspapers. They've been full of quotes from interested observers who fret about OPEC's health and low oil prices—people like Chemical Bank vice president Gary Smeal ("I don't want to see a drop in oil prices"); Chevron chairman George Keller (he views a sharp decline in prices "with horror"); former Energy Secretary James Schlesinger ("volatility in oil prices may be worse in its impact than high prices"); and oil analyst John Lichtblau (his *New York Times* pitch for moderation came under the headline: OPEC's HUMBLING COULD BE A PROBLEM). The King James version of this position appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* as the lead story just two days before the last OPEC meeting. "CARTEL'S REVIVAL: OPEC Nears an Accord to Trim Oil Production to Avert Price Collapse," went the headline. The story began: "A spectacular collapse in oil prices—an event that many people would applaud at first but, experts say, rue at leisure—apparently has been ruled out for the time being." The story turned out to be mistaken, but it served to alert readers that cheaper oil is something to be rued.

> 'It is our last chance,' Qassem Ahmed Taqi, Iraq's oil minister, said a few days ago. And, in fact, it is the last chance for averting disaster for a lot of people. . . . It's all a bit paradoxical, of course. Talk of lower oil prices stirs visions, in the average motorist's head, of a return to cheap gasoline, and he wonders what's so bad about that. Even on a slightly more sophisticated level, anyone who recalls the trouble caused by the surge in oil prices in the 1970s may wonder why a decline would be so dreadful.

Why, indeed. Let's examine the case. We will start at

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the "slightly more sophisticated level," looking at the economic problems caused by past oil shocks and the corresponding benefits that everyone agrees would flow from a partial reversal. We will then examine the case for the negative effects of such an event. By establishing how substantial these are, and whether they outweigh the benefits, we will be in a position to know whether it is time for some preemptive ruing.

THE OIL SHOCKS of 1973-1974 and 1979-1980 acted like a huge excise tax on the economies of all oil-importing nations. It was the worst kind of tax: it not only reduced demand and brought on two recessions by draining 2 to 3 percent of G.N.P. from Western economies, it also generated inflation by increasing the cost of oil and all oil-based products. The combination produced a new phenomenon: stagflation. After the second price shock of 1979-1980, inflation threatened to get out of hand, so the U.S. government imposed severe restrictions on money supplies, which in turn worsened the recession. The result is relatively stable prices today, but at the cost of the deepest and longest recession since the 1930s.

An oil price collapse therefore would mean tax relief of the best kind: if the price went from the current Saudi bench mark of $34 to $20, it would pump more than $90 billion into the economies of oil-importing nations, increasing purchasing power and demand, and stimulating growth. At the same time, the drop in the price of oil and oil-related goods would be deflationary, and thus would give us what we haven't seen in a decade: noninflationary growth.

The U.S. alone would receive a stimulus of more than $20 billion a year, almost two-thirds of the income tax cut scheduled for July 1982. Germany and Japan would be even bigger winners, since they are almost totally dependent on external sources of oil. Secondary effects would be felt everywhere. Germany and Japan were the engines of world economic growth in the '60s, until their economies too stalled on inflationary oil prices and the subsequent corrective monetary squeezes. Renewed growth of Western economies would stimulate international trade, and would revive markets for third world exports. That would improve their balance of payments and reduce their demand for new loans, while improving their ability to repay old ones. And if the moderating effect on inflation was reflected in lowered interest rates, that too would help relieve the burden on third world countries. For example, for Brazil and Mexico every 1 percent drop in interest rates would improve their balance of payments position by $700 million to $800 million a year.

But the primary effects on developing countries would be even more dramatic. Their oil bill has gone from $7 billion a year to more than $100 billion in the last decade. Since the second oil shock alone, their indebtedness has risen from $174 billion in the mid-1970s to more than $500 billion today. Debt payment on this enormous sum has gone from 14 percent of export earnings to more than 22 percent. Third world countries have been particularly hard hit, not only because they had weak economies to start with, but also because, never having been rich enough to afford to waste energy on fripperies, they have been less able than Western countries to cut back on nonessential uses. Lower oil prices means money in their and their creditors' pockets.

That, with numbers added, is the happy vision in the head of the "average motorist" of the benefits of an OPEC price collapse. Those who say that the simple people are wrong respond with two arguments: the Rollover and the Velvet Trap scenarios. The Rollover scenario (named after the Jane Fonda movie in which sudden Arab withdrawals from Western banks lead to a worldwide banking collapse) is simple. Some oil exporters are big lenders. Their losses from a drop in oil prices would decrease the world savings pool, drain the banks, and cause a banking crisis. Similarly, some oil exporters, like Mexico, are big borrowers. They would find it harder to repay their loans, triggering a default and adding to the banking crisis. A corollary is that if oil exporters lose part of their 1970s windfall, they will cut not only their savings but their consumption, too, thus decreasing world demand and inducing economic contraction.

The flaw in this argument is transparent. Say the price of oil drops $10 per barrel tomorrow. That is $10 lost to the Saudis and the Mexicans. But the $10 doesn't disappear into thin air, it is only transferred to the oil importing countries. As one Federal Reserve Board governor put it: "The money would come from all the banks and go to all the banks." The $10 would go, for example, to Brazil, the world's largest debtor, and pump $3.2 billion every year into its economy, which could be used to cut its debt service to the banks almost in half. However Brazil decided to divide its windfall between saving and spending, the result would be a gain in world saving and consumption that would countervail the OPEC loss. Indeed, according to Robert Pindyck of M.I.T., there would be a net *increase* in savings and consumption because of the enormous stimulative effects that the price cuts would have on the world economy.

To claim that the net world savings pool will dry up, one has to resort to an even more sophisticated argument: in the hands of oil exporters that $10 is likely to be saved, while in the hands of oil importers it's likely to be spent. People tend to think of OPEC revenues as a huge savings pool. And it was, for a very short time and for a very few lightly populated states in the Arab world. But no more. OPEC is no longer a net saver; it runs a deficit. The initial rush of oil money in the early 1970s created an enormous appetite for goods and services. The heavily populated countries like Venezuela and Nigeria are running heavy deficits; Saudia Arabia's current account is near balance; the only OPEC countries with surpluses are tiny Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Furthermore, even if it does turn out that, when transferred to oil-importing countries, the $10

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generates less savings than it did in the hands of oil exporters, there is a simple corrective: oil import taxes to soak up part of that $10, taking it away from consumers and putting it in the hands of governments. If, for example, the U.S. taxes half of a $10 price drop, it would instantly create a fund of $7 billion a year. If this money were added to revenues, it would reduce Treasury borrowing needs, and, in effect, increase the pool of world savings by $7 billion.

The shrinking savings pool argument leads analysts into strange territory. According to William Cline of the Institute for International Economics, "non-oil developing countries may tend to be crowded out of international capital markets." The logic of this argument is that it is better for a country like Brazil to pay high prices for oil—so it can then more easily borrow the money back. But certainly it is better for Brazil to keep the $10 at home than to give it to OPEC, have OPEC deposit it in the banks, and then have Brazil borrow it back at 15 percent interest. Take away the mystification of "recycling"—and recycling always means high interest rates for OPEC lenders and a hefty cut for the banks—and the "crowding out" argument turns out to be empty.

SOME ROLLOVER PROPONENTS will agree that in the long run the savings pool will not shrink and things will balance out. But, they ask, what about the short run? A precipitous drop in prices could bankrupt oil exporting borrowers like Mexico and bring down the whole banking house of cards. That is why some, like *The New York Times*, who welcome a decline in oil prices, take the "moderate" position of preferring that it be gradual.

The case for moderation hinges on the delicate position of four oil exporters with big populations, big debts, and almost total dependence on oil revenues. Mexico, Venezuela, Nigeria, and Indonesia make up the Gang of Four, although some analysts like to throw in Canada and Texas, presumably to add a first-world flavor to the stew. But since neither Canada, with a trade surplus of $9.5 billion for the first nine months of 1982, nor Texas, which joined the Union in 1845, is in any danger of defaulting, we can restrict our analysis to the Gang of Four. Imagine that the price of oil drops $10 a barrel overnight. That would cost Venezuela about $7 billion a year, and Indonesia about $4 billion. It would cause hardship to Venezuelans and Indonesians, but it wouldn't break the international banking system. Venezuela has reserves of about $16 billion, Indonesia about $7 billion. (And according to the latest statement of the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, bank exposure on Indonesian loans totals only $5 billion.) In contrast, Nigeria is in terrible shape, having run out of foreign reserves. Yet Western bank exposure on Nigerian loans is only $6 billion, spread among many banks. Furthermore, Nigeria is eligible for almost half of that in I.M.F. loans, if it agrees to tighten its belt (which is what its economy needs anyway to get its wild spending and inflation under control).

So the entire doomsday scenario rests on Mexico. Mexico owes private banks about $60 billion. A $10 drop in oil prices would mean a revenue loss of about $5.5 billion. Assume the worst. Assume that Mexico can increase its exports by only about 200,000 barrels a day (the estimate of the Mexican finance ministry). At the new oil price, that would bring in about $1.5 billion, leaving Mexico with a $4 billion shortfall. Assume that the fall in oil prices does not produce a fall in inflation and a consequent fall in interest rates (which for every 1 percent decrease would bring Mexico $700 million). Does Mexico go under, and with it the entire banking system, for want of $4 billion? Of course not. The international banking system—the Western central banks, the I.M.F., and the U.S. Treasury—would come to the rescue of Mexico today, just as it did six months ago during the peso crisis. It would have all the more reason to help Mexico out of a problem that was not the result of Mexican errors, but of uncontrollable events in the oil market. As Richard Mattione, a Brookings Institution economist, put it, "It is not beyond the wit of man to come up with a plan to bail out those hard hit." Mexico can stretch out its debt, it can be given more I.M.F. support, and, if need be, it can be allowed a moratorium on repayment of principal.

There is a simple way to put the Mexican problem in perspective. Assume the U.S. government decided to capture half the revenue of a $10 drop in oil prices in the form of a $5 per barrel oil import fee. (U.S. government officials already have been considering such a tax to encourage conservation and to keep marginal domestic wells in production.) The fee would create a $7 billion windfall fund for the U.S. government, almost twice the projected Mexican shortfall. Assume that the world banking system, the I.M.F., and all other Western governments froze at the sight of Mexico's peril, and did

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nothing. The U.S. alone could take $4 billion out of its windfall fund, and solve the problem: it could give the money to Mexico directly, in return, say, for oil to be delivered at a later date to the strategic petroleum reserve. Mexico would have its money, the banks would collect their debt payments on time, and the United States would have acquired a secure supply of oil for future emergencies—and would still have $3 billion left over for other uses.

If even in the short term the strains on the international banking system are easily managed, why doomsday? We come to the final refuge of the doomsday scenarist: psychology. It is said that any shock to the world financial system makes bankers and traders nervous; any instability can lead to panic. This is the fear itself argument: bankers are jittery people, and if things change too rapidly and they start thinking that bad things are going to happen, they'll then act so irrationally that they will happen.

This argument is not entirely implausible. But there are two things to be said about it. First, if in fact the real problem is self-fulfilling prophecies not based on fact, then the solution is for people to stop going around prophesying. Second, markets do get jittery and can act irrationally. But not for very long. That is why market economies work. An example of short-term irrationality was the response of the stock market, on January 25, 1983, to the news that the OPEC meeting had broken up and oil prices were headed down. The New York Stock Exchange registered a loss of 23 points. Stocks went down across the board, even in industries like trucking, which benefit from a drop in oil prices. On that same day on the currency markets, the yen dropped against the dollar—another wholly irrational response, in view of the fact that any drop in oil prices will benefit the Japanese economy, which depends totally on imported oil, more than the U.S. economy, which has a significant oil-producing sector. These market actions made sense only under the assumption that the international financial system faced imminent collapse. In that case, one would not want to be left holding stocks, not even trucking stocks, and one would rather be in dollars than in any other currency. But when the traders woke up the next day to discover that the sky was still overhead, they reverted to a rational economic response to OPEC's disarray. Stocks and the yen recovered dramatically.

The doomsday argument fails, therefore, for the simple reason that if oil falls by $10 a barrel tomorrow, the money doesn't disappear; OPEC simply loses control of it and transfers it to places like the United States, where the $10 can be used to stimulate consumption and thus noninflationary growth, or to increase savings to balance Western budgets, or, if necessary, to support the international banking system.

THIS BRINGS US to the Velvet Trap scenario, as Chevron chairman George Keller calls it: a sharp drop in oil prices will lead to an increase in oil consumption, a slowdown in energy substitution out of oil, and a decrease in marginal production from expensive non-OPEC wells, like those in the Arctic and the North Sea. Increasing world consumption and decreasing non-OPEC production will set the stage for a new oil price shock in the future. This problem is real, but its extent is often exaggerated and the solutions to it usually ignored. Much conservation over the last ten years has been structural and will not be reversed. People are not going to rip the insulation out of their houses, abandon new factories, or discard the Boeing 767 because they are too fuel efficient. Many industries are developing multi-use energy generators, so they can switch fuels depending on market conditions. Admittedly, there will be some increase in consumption, and some decrease in switching to alternative energy sources. There will also be some loss of marginal oil production. But the point that is missed is that the extent of these three effects, which up to now has been regulated by OPEC's pricing decisions, will now be controllable by Western governments.

Again, the mechanism is an import fee. Say the price of oil dropped overnight to $20 a barrel. The U.S. government could decide that it did not want the price that consumers pay or domestic producers get to fall below, say, $28. It would impose an $8 per barrel import fee to encourage conservation and keep expensive—though not the most expensive—wells in production. The beauty of a price drop coupled with an import fee is that it allows Americans to set their own price for domestic production and consumption, and it keeps the tax at home.

Those who argue against import fees say that making Americans pay $28 for oil will reduce the economic stimulus of an oil price drop. True, but the sole purpose of an oil import fee is to prop up the *relative* price of energy. Since the $8 is collected by the government, it can be returned to the economy in order to stimulate growth in any number of ways, as long as none rewards oil consumption—for example, a jobs program, or reduced marginal income taxes, or an addition to the

COMING:

George V. Higgins on

Boston's Busing Failure.

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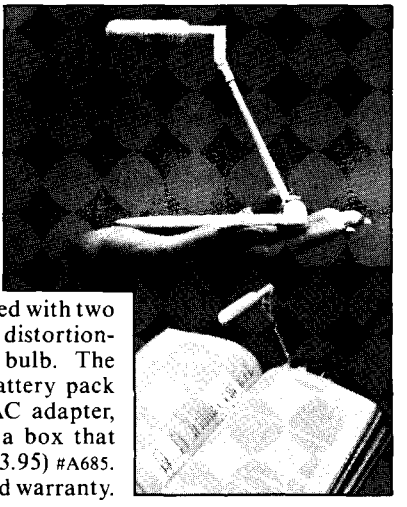

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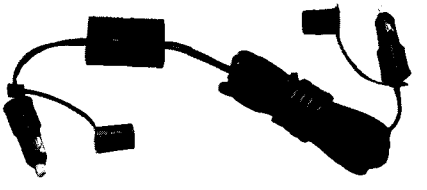

Your car battery is dead. How would you like to recharge the battery and start the car *without ever even opening the hood?* Sound impossible? It's not, thanks to the Easy Charge, which takes the old idea of jumper cables and refines it to a new level of ease, convenience and safety. With traditional jumper cables you have to maneuver a second car fender-to-fender with the disabled car, open both hoods, and attach leads from battery to battery. The Easy Charge simplifies this process brilliantly by substituting connection from cigarette lighter to cigarette lighter. You just plug one end of the Easy Charge into the lighter of a running car, pass the 16′ cord through both car windows and insert the other end in the lighter of the disabled car. A trickle charge immediately starts flowing into the dead battery. After a few minutes' wait the battery is recharged sufficiently to restart the car. The Easy Charge comes in a handy plastic storage envelope, is small enough to fit in the glove compartment. **$20.00** ($2.95) #A629.

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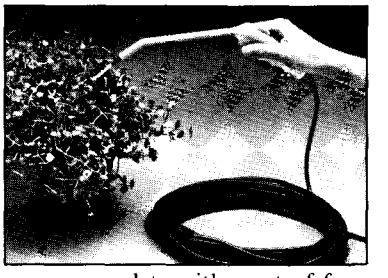

Do your houseplants run you ragged, back and forth, trip after trip, watering can in hand? There is an easier way: with an indoor garden hose you can water them all in a single trip. Think of the steps waiting to be saved! This 50′ (that is a lot of reach) vinyl hose comes complete with a set of four adaptors that readily attach to most indoor and outdoor faucets. From there you just take the water where you want it, an easy-control handle allows you to turn a splashless stream of water on and off as needed. This indoor hose comes with a snap-in misting attachment, so after you water the roots you can spray the foliage and wash away the dust accumulation that impairs a plant's health as well as its beauty. The indoor garden hose kit costs just **$11.00** ($1.95) #A681. It will make your watering almost as simple as turning on the faucet.

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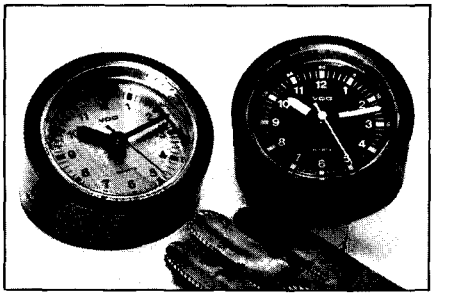

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savings pool (by reducing the budget deficit). In all cases, the money that would otherwise have gone to OPEC producers would end up stimulating the American economy, while keeping energy conservation at whatever level we wish.

Trap theorists must then argue that there is something natural about the current price of oil. *The Washington Post*, for example, tells us that OPEC "never pushed up oil prices, and the collapse of OPEC would not bring prices down." The assumption here is that $34 a barrel is really a kind of market price, and OPEC just a convenient facade created for reasons of third world pride. One's intuitive feeling is that this argument is wrong. In the current issue of *The Public Interest*, Arlon Tussing explains why. True, he says, OPEC didn't push oil prices up in 1973 and 1980. It froze prices at an abnormally high level by moving the contract price to the spot price at the peak of its reaction to the worldwide panics engendered by the 1973 embargo and the overthrow of the Shah. Normally these run-ups in spot prices (which exaggerate real price fluctuations in the market because they deal with such a small percentage of total oil sales) subside when the panic ends. What OPEC did was ratchet up the contract price, and thus lock in higher prices at the top of the swing. In the end, of course, the market worked its will slowly but inexorably. The new monopoly price encouraged conservation, substitution, and marginal production: world demand for oil fell by 13 percent in the last three years alone, and non-OPEC production rose dramatically. The OPEC bench mark is now untenable. Tussing estimates that a free market price for oil would today be between $10 and $18 a barrel. An informal *Fortune* poll places the price somewhere between $18 and $22. But this is not a question for economists or magazines. The market will decide, and the price will undoubtedly fall fast and hard *if* OPEC collapses. Will OPEC collapse? A better question is, will the West let it?

EVEN THOSE with only mixed feelings about OPEC admit that it is losing its stranglehold on the world economy. "Today, with less than half the world oil market, OPEC may only be able to re-exert control over the price if nonmember producers, like Britain, the United States, and Mexico agree to cooperate with it." So writes Paul Lewis in *The New York Times*. His advice: cooperate, and perhaps guarantee OPEC a price floor of $25 per barrel. Why? The debt problem, conservation, and "political advantages." "Stable prices would bolster Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, all relatively firm friends of the West in a particularly volatile region. It would also improve North-South relations." To hear these clichés again is to despair for the West. Precisely these arguments were made in the 1970s to justify Western paralysis in the face of extortionist pricing policies by OPEC. Acquiescing would win friends and influence oil producers, it was said. It did the opposite. It earned their contempt, and, as the 1979-1980 price trebling proved, whetted their appetite for imposing more oil taxes on the West. As for the South—the real South like Tanzania and Zaire and Bangladesh—it suffered even more disastrous economic consequences from the fifteen-fold increase in its oil bill over the last decade than did the Western countries, because it had so little to start with and so little to fall back on.

Still, the new petroclass persists. Professor Peter Odell, an OPEC expert at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, says that the present situation "offers a golden chance to build new political bridges between North and South." His South (meaning the rich OPEC countries) used the *old* political bridges to cross into the North and cart away a trillion dollars worth of capital, in what Lewis admits was "probably the largest forced transfer of wealth since the Spanish conquistadores plundered the gold of ancient Peru." Now that we have a chance to recoup some of that loss, we are being advised to build new bridges instead. What do we get in return? Lewis again: "a long-term agreement with the major producers for reasonable price increases [increases, mind you] in return for guaranteed supplies and an end to disruptive oil shocks." Guaranteed supplies, at a time when oil producers can't find buyers.

NONE OF THIS is new. OPEC pulled off one of its first coups of the 1970s with the notorious Tehran agreement, in which OPEC broke existing contracts and raised prices. The State Department urged Western governments to accept: if they offered no resistance, they could at least count on five years' secure supply at stable prices. When the agreement was announced, the State Department called a special press conference to hail it and to say that it now "expected the previously turbulent international oil situation to calm down." That was in February 1971.

Today the petroclass—the bankers, oil companies, and consultants—are at it again, defending their interests in the name of yours. If OPEC dies, the businessmen will lose money, and the academics their subject. So they are carrying out a rear-guard action to convince Westerners that high oil prices are good. And they have been doing more than propaganda work. Some are working within OPEC to keep its inherent national and economic contradictions from destroying it. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that in the frantic behind-the-scenes talks among OPEC members to hammer out production and price accords before the Geneva crisis meeting of January 22-24, the chief executive officers of Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, and Chevron joined in the deliberations. The *Journal* continues: "The wide consensus against a continued slide in oil prices—a consensus of oil-producing countries, major oil companies, and international banks—seems to have stilled the chronic political rivalries among the OPEC nations themselves." In fact, it didn't. The petroclass failed in Geneva, but you can be sure that it will keep trying to get Saudi Arabia to lie down with Iran, and to get you to roll over for both of them.

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The bankers created this mess. Now they're demanding that we pay for it.

THE BIG BANK BAILOUT

BY WILLIAM J. QUIRK

HELPING THE RUSSIANS build missiles aimed at us is a pretty terrible thing for an American to do. You might even say it's treason. Helping the Arabs roll the price of oil from $2.50 a barrel (1972) to $34 a barrel (1982)—the results of which included deep recession, millions of unemployed, and untold misery—isn't exactly patriotic either. Why, then, over the past ten years, have we given away about $800 billion to help the Soviet and oil blocs?

To be sure, these billions were not called gifts, and they were not given with the consent or even the knowledge of the people. They were called loans and they were given by international bankers. The bankers gave the loans because they had figured out a way to profit from brokering away the West's wealth. They did so under the cover of two theories, "détente" and "recycling," the expensive side effects of which were never made clear to the American people.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

"Recycling" gave the impression that somehow the money was going to come back to us, but beyond that it was a little vague. "Détente" was to be, in Henry Kissinger's words, an instrument for "moderating Soviet conduct." The Soviet leaders saw it as a way to stabilize Communist Party rule in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In the late 1960s, after fifty years of Communist power, the Soviet economy was coming up empty. Détente looked like a way to improve the economy without political risk to the Communist Party. The Russians thought they could hothouse Western technology and make it work within the existing system. They would be like Peter the Great, who, in the early eighteenth century, introduced Western industrial techniques into Russia. The trouble was, the modern Russians didn't have any money. Lenin is supposed to have said that the capitalists would sell him the rope with which he would hang them. Brezhnev decided he should get the rope on easy credit. The West, in essence, should agree to finance and stabilize the existing system of totalitarianism.

President Nixon was agreeable, but he didn't have any money either, and he couldn't very well ask Congress to appropriate taxpayer funds to aid Russia. It seemed equally unthinkable, at first, that a commercial bank could lend to a sovereign government. Governments are supposed to lend to other governments, since such loans are inherently political. The borrowing country will repay if, and only if, it is in its national interest at the time. David Rockefeller, however, then chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, thought it could be arranged. With the banks providing the money, the Comecon "debt" snowballed from $7.9 billion in 1973 to over $80 billion in 1981. To collect on your "debt," if the Russians didn't feel like repaying, all you had to do was foreclose on the Kremlin.

Rockefeller explained his theory: "Just because a country is technically called Communist doesn't mean that a capitalist institution such as the Chase Bank can't deal with them on a mutually beneficial basis, and, indeed, we do deal with most of the so-called Communist countries of the world on a basis that has worked out very well, I think, for both of us." Thomas C.

William J. Quirk, a contributing editor to TNR, is a professor of law at the University of South Carolina Law School.

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Theobald, head of Citibank's international division, said simply: "Who knows which political system works? The only thing we care about is: can they pay their bills?"

The bankers were nominally Americans, but their political principles were those of the new supranational class of which they were members. The new class, rootless and parasitic, gathers annually at meetings of the International Monetary Fund. In 1979 the I.M.F. met in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. David Rockefeller's Chase Bank gave a cocktail party for a thousand friends and clients from all over the world. As the cocktails flowed, Bill Moyers, who had flown over with David in the Chase jet, asked a Chase aide what was going on. It's simple, the aide said. These people had gathered to "reaffirm, well, a feeling that they're part of the real global elite, which is, after all, what they are." These people, he continued, "place the limits, in effect, on what any sovereign nation can do."

On the way home, the Chase group stopped over in Rome to visit some clients at the Vatican. As he stood in St. Peter's Square, Moyers reflected, "Men like David Rockefeller move beyond religious, political, cultural, national boundaries with great ease. And here in St. Peter's Square, the heart of the Roman Catholic faith, there's something very symbolic to me about that. The Church has always transcended national, political, and cultural lines, and so, in its own way, does the universal church of Money. It goes where it will, and the laws of no single country can regulate it."

TO MAKE MONEY, the bankers must keep it moving. The West's wealth, controlled by the new elite, was up for grabs. The Arabs, to get their share, also went to history, but they didn't have to go as far back as Peter the Great. After World War I, the English and French imposed reparations upon Germany that the Germans couldn't pay. The English and French owed war debts to the U.S. that they said they couldn't pay. The U.S. had plenty of money. American bankers, with stunning ingenuity, came up with a scheme to get the American public to pay the German reparations. The bankers sold German bonds to the American public; the proceeds, minus fees, went to Germany, which paid England and France, which paid the U.S. Treasury. One hundred and fourteen German bond issues were sold here; the new loans paid the interest on the old, and the reparations, too. The German game was going so well the bankers peddled to the American public the bonds of other foreign countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Rumania. By 1933, $25 billion of foreign bonds were in default. The bonds the bankers sold to U.S. investors turned out to be gifts from U.S. investors.

The bankers made no apologies for selling the bad bonds to the public. They explained to the Senate Finance Committee in 1931 that they were just doing their job. Charles E. Mitchell, chairman of the First National City Bank, testified: "With respect to the bonds generally, we are merchants." Thomas W. Lamont of J. P. Morgan & Co. supported Mitchell: "We are merchants. That is what we are, just like any merchant, in the grain business, in the cotton business, or anything else." As one witness told the Senate Committee on Manufactures, "I do not think you would be justified in holding the bankers responsible for the wide speculative craze that worked through the country. I think we were trying to supply what the customer wanted . . . I think the banker is like the grocer. He supplies what his customer wants."

Memories, even the most bitter, fade. By 1973 the bankers were ready to try the same game again. Again, the U.S. had most of the money. This time the money was pumped from the U.S. to poor countries who passed it to the Arabs who passed it back to the banks. The money transfer was tremendous. In 1972 the Arabs received $24 billion from the rest of the world. In 1982 they received $230 billion. Since all oil prices followed OPEC's lead, in the U.S. the cost of oil went from $20.3 billion in 1972 to $225 billion in 1981. The extra cost came to $820 per person, or $3,300 for a family of four. The Arabs, with the banks brokering the deal, had made a major withdrawal from the West. The public was told that OPEC had control of the world's energy and could charge what it liked. The OPEC surplus started slowly at $25 billion a year; by 1980 it was rolling along at $110 billion; in 1981 it was $90 billion. In 1982, having induced a worldwide recession, the surplus disappeared.

The current "lifting cost" of a barrel of Saudi crude is 50 cents. Even at 1972 prices, $2.50 a barrel, oil was a fantastically profitable commodity. Beginning in 1973-1974 the Arabs, with the bankers' cooperation, became tax collectors. The tax was collected in the form of payment for the oil, say $4 for the oil and $30 for the tax. They sought simply to extend their corner on oil to all of the West's capital and real wealth. The West, its economic sovereignty rapidly eroding, made no response.

POOR COUNTRIES, of course, could not pay the new tax. They have run trade deficits for as long as anyone can remember and will for as long as anyone can foresee. The ingenious solution was "recycling." The banks loaned the money to Zaire so it could pay its tax to the Arabs who then deposited the tax collections back in the banks. The parties thought the debt merry-go-round could go on forever. In year one the banks loaned Zaire enough to pay its oil tax, say $1 billion. In year two the banks rolled over that billion and had to loan enough new money to cover year two's oil tax, say another billion, plus the interest on the outstanding debt, say $200 million. The geometric progression of compound interest worked heavily against the poor countries. The borrowing had to increase, and increase at an accelerating rate. Within a few years the figures were outlandish. Mexico, for example, owed, in interest alone, $250 million *a week*. Brazil was about the same. The bankers had

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disregarded the fatal weakness of a debt merry-go-round—that you can't get off.

Because of the basic principle of the merry-go-round, the debt balloons in proportion to the certainty that it cannot be repaid. Borrowing is needed increasingly just to pay interest rather than to finance imports. Mexico's debt jumped from $40 billion in 1980 to $80 billion in 1982; Argentina's shot from $13.7 billion in 1978 to over $40 billion when it decided to invade the Falklands; Poland, before Solidarity, ran its debt from $10 billion in 1976 to $27 billion in 1981.

The figures are beyond comprehension. In June 1982, according to Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, the poor countries owed $265 billion to private Western banks. Latin America alone owed $168 billion to the banks. Including loans from Western governments and international agencies, the poor countries owed $500 billion. Counting in loans to companies in poor countries, the total was $626 billion, of which $400 billion was owed to the banks. Even for a grocer, that's a lot of lettuce.

HALF OF THE POOR-COUNTRY debt is due in 1983. In 1982, $140 billion was due, of which $45 billion was not paid; twenty-two countries were forced to "reschedule"—a banker's euphemism for default. The debt is so short term because, as the merry-go-round accelerated—the second oil shock of 1979 gave it a good push—the bankers thought they could reduce their risk by making the loans shorter.

The bankers have been reassuring. They have borrowed a phrase from Abe Beame in the early days of the New York City crisis; the city was not bust, he said, it just had a temporary liquidity problem. Now, said the bankers, the poor countries with no money had a problem of liquidity rather than solvency. Further, the "liquidity problem arises," said Chase vice chairman William S. Ogden, "from the increasing unwillingness of the international financial community to lend."

In the foreign bond scam of the 1920s, the bankers were pure middlemen or brokers. The foreign governments paid them a fee for selling the bonds to the U.S. public. The foreign governments got the proceeds, the bankers got their commission and fees, and the U.S. public got the ultimate loss. The current recycling variations couldn't use bonds—the U.S. investors did remember that much. You couldn't sell them the bonds of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Bulgaria, to say nothing of Zaire, Zambia, and Poland. And it was unthinkable to try to sell Russian or East German bonds to Americans. The impossibility of bond sales forced bankers to become "committed middlemen." They took in Arab deposits and made loans to the poor countries. They are vulnerable both ways.

In September, Denis Healey, former British Chancellor of the Exchequer, called the Toronto meeting of the I.M.F. the "last chance to save the world from a catastrophe even greater than the slump of the 1930s." *The Economist*, in an article titled, "Not With a Bang But a Fonda" described "two theories of how the banking world could end: the big bang theory and the gradual-disappearance-down-a-black-hole theory." As in Jane Fonda's movie, *Rollover*, the big bang theorists postulate a major default, say of Argentina, which sets off a chain reaction of defaults in the highly interdependent banking system, collapsing it within twenty-four hours.

The black-hole theorists see a more gradual process driven by the poor performance of bank stock and commercial paper and increasing "tiering." "Tiering" means simply that lenders distinguish among banks based on credit quality; recent victims are the certificates of deposit of Chase and Continental Illinois. The banks themselves are beginning to discriminate in the critical interbank market—where Bank A, with extra funds, will loan to Bank B, which is short, perhaps because it just failed to receive $100 million from Argentina. Bank B, if it can't get an acceptable rate from Bank A, will slide gradually into a downward spiral of high rates for funds, lost deposits, and disappearing profits. Since the banks are all tied together by past interbank loans, each one slipping in will pull some others in behind it. The bankers, however, do not consider themselves at risk. They are confident that the U.S. taxpayer, like the bondholders of the 1920s game, will take over the loss.

Where was the money? The bankers had no idea. Could anyone find $27 billion in Poland? Or $40 billion in Argentina? Very little of the money could be traced to productive projects. Most went up in smoke covering balance-of-payments deficits. A fair amount seems to be in Swiss bank accounts with numbers belonging to Argentine generals.

DID THE WEST, and particularly the U.S., need the capital the bankers were giving away? Well, two M.I.T. professors recently estimated that 30 to 50 million jobs were lost during the 1970s as a result of plant relocations, closings, and contractions. The U.S., at an extraordinarily fast rate, underwent "deindustrialization," a process that will be fatal to the future strength of the country. The professors estimate that 70 percent of private-sector jobs existing in 1970 were gone by 1980. The bankers turned down meritorious domestic borrowers with the simple, unanswerable question: "Why should I lend money to you when I can make so much more lending to Mexico?"

The bankers have been no more prudent in their recent attempts to attract capital by wooing domestic customers away from the money funds. Because the banks are now paying such high dividends to their depositors, they will have to charge high rates to borrowers. Two things will happen: The banks will attract the least creditworthy borrowers, just as they did with the foreign loans; and inflation will rise.

Realistically, the foreign loans don't exist anymore: they continue, however, to have a spiritual presence. The bankers will not write them off: loans to Poland, Zaire, Rumania, and Argentina are still counted as assets

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of the banks. Although they have not the weight of a wisp, they continue to balance the books.

For the bankers have created a fictional world where the loans are still good. No country, according to the bankers' new definition, is bankrupt unless it can't borrow to pay the interest anymore. The bankers and poor countries have had a mutual interest in maintaining the fiction. The poor countries, if they told the truth, wouldn't get any more money. The bankers, if they told the truth, would have to write off almost $400 billion of bad loans. But reality is breaking through: now the interests seem to be diverging as the poor countries look ahead to fifty years of I.M.F. servitude to pay off foreign bankers.

The bankers are now caught by the basic principle of the merry-go-round. Not only can you not admit past errors, you have to keep lending ever-increasing new money. The Russians project they will need the West to provide a new $70 billion for Comecon by 1986. The third worlders will need at least $80 billion a year.

The bankers said the solution was more lending. In their view, the most dangerous threat to the world's financial system is a major retrenchment in international bank lending. "The problem," said a former senior officer of the New York Fed, "is that there are psychological concerns about the creditworthiness of countries and banks that loaned to these countries." David Rockefeller agreed the problems were psychological: "Most of the international banks have been cautious in what they've done. Even in a situation like Mexico, I don't see any risk of ultimate loss." Chase vice chairman William S. Ogden emphasized, in an article in *The Wall Street Journal*, "There is a *negligible* risk of permanent default." This exact phrase appeared a month later in the testimony of Treasury Secretary Regan to Congress—without the italics and without attribution.

THE BANKERS' fictional world is contrary and perverse. In the bankers' strange world, insolvent debtors demand more money and dictate terms to the lenders. "The super-debtors," Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina (who together owe $250 billion), are able unilaterally to "reschedule" their debt. Poland and Rumania have done the same thing.

In the second half of 1982, Secretary Regan testified, U.S. regional banks (all of those except the largest) "have sought to limit or reduce exposure." To the extent they are successful, the Secretary added, "they place a greater and disproportionate strain on the resources of the larger banks and official lenders that are committed to the international financial system." The big banks—who had been laying off as much as possible on the regionals—were crasser in their criticism. The regionals, they said, were eager enough for high returns while things were good, but now, at the first hint of trouble, they had run for cover. Jacques de Larosiere, managing director of the I.M.F. (which is itself almost out of money), lectured the regionals that they should evaluate each loan "flexibly and pragmatically, keeping in mind that a cooperative international effort will best serve the interests of all the parties involved and, ultimately, the financial system itself." What had the regional banks done to reap such a bitter and threatening harvest? It was simple. They had begun to act like bankers again. They were attempting to reassert discipline and sense in a world that would live only on fiction.

The losses, the banks say, should be shifted to the taxpayer. The whole deal had been set up to evade democratic procedures, but now that it has gone bad the taxpayer should pay for it. Indeed, say the banks, the taxpayer has no choice. He can pay now or pay later, but he has to pay. He can pay indirectly through the I.M.F. or the Federal Reserve, but he has to get dollars to Mexico so Mexico can pay Chase.

BOTH THE OFFICIAL Republican government and the shadow Democratic government agree with the bankers that the taxpayer must pay. For the shadow government, Felix Rohatyn, New York financier and fabricator of the New York City voodoo economic bailout, is the advance favorite to be Secretary of the Treasury when the Democrats get back in. He recommends a new Reconstruction Finance Corporation to take over the bad loans—in essence, the federal government would bail them out. He recently wrote that the "mere existence" of his new R.F.C. "would help remove the widespread concern about the soundness of our banks, which is clearly detrimental to an economic recovery."

The official government takes a similar tack. In a November speech in Boston, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker told bankers to keep lending: "New credits should not be subject to supervisory criticism." In December the Administration asked Congress to appropriate $8 billion for the I.M.F. Treasury Secretary Regan, in testimony to the House Banking Committee, denied that the idea was to bail out the big banks. Far from it, he said: "Our efforts are primarily in defense of the average American and his own economic interests." How will the average American benefit from keeping the merry-go-round going? The Secretary described the bleak result if the U.S. and major Western governments "follow a 'hands-off' approach to the debt problems." He believed that the banker would not supply new money unless the taxpayer chipped in, and, consequently, the "hands-off" approach "would most likely result in a cessation of new private lending to L.D.C.s [less developed countries] in general." Since they had received $45 billion of new bank loans in 1981, a drop to zero would deprive them of $45 billion of purchasing power. Without a new $45 billion of new loans, they could not buy $45 billion worth of goods from the industrial West. The Secretary testified: "This would represent a direct loss of 0.3 to 0.5 percent of G.N.P. in the industrial countries; secondary effects could double that loss." In the U.S., "growth would be about 1 percent less than we're expecting, and our trade

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deficit would grow very rapidly." That's what the "hands-off" approach would get you.

Many people who voted for Ronald Reagan thought they were voting for the "hands-off" approach, which during the election campaign was known as "getting government off the backs of the people." Times change, and the Administration has adopted a particularly perverse Keynesianism, under which you have to give poor countries money so they can buy goods from you. (Poor American people, of course, do not qualify). Giving huge sums to Arabs and third world countries and to the Soviets creates demand. These welfare recipients will buy U.S. goods, creating jobs, and so on. Of course, this is exactly what the bankers have been doing since 1973.

The second bad result of the "hands-off" approach, the Secretary testified, is that the banks will have to recognize some losses. What happens, he asked, "if foreign borrowers do not receive sufficient assistance to adjust in an orderly way?" What if they can't pay the banks? American workers in "Providence, Pascoag, or Woonsocket" are then, he said, in real trouble. He posed, hypothetically, a sound, well-run U.S. bank of $10 billion in assets (loans) which has $600 million of capital. Regulators require the bank to maintain at least $6 in capital for every $100 in assets. "What happens if 10 percent, or $60 million, of its capital is eroded through foreign loan losses? It must contract its lending by $1 billion." The net result is that $1 billion in loans can't be made in that community—20,000 home mortgages at $50,000 each that can't be financed, or 10,000 lines of credit to local businesses at $100,000 each that can't be extended.

Republican perversity was now building up. A loss plainly exists, but if we don't cover it up, if we recognize it, the insolvent bank will have to cut back its lending. Families will not get housing and business will not get needed credit. They will get houses and credit if the taxpayer gives money to the I.M.F., which gives it to Mexico, which gives it to Chase. The Reagan Administration is about to propose giving another $7 billion to the I.M.F. The American in Pascoag is probably not sophisticated enough to understand why that's good for him.

The Secretary's hypothetical example demonstrates how pathetically thinly capitalized the U.S. banks are. The regulators only require capital equal to 6 percent of loans, which leaves very little room for error. In 1930-1933, when 7,000 banks failed, capital requirements were much higher. Today, the exposure of the twelve major banks in Mexico and Argentina alone exceeds 100 percent of their capital.

The Secretary's most appealing pitch is that he is just trying to buy some time to give the economy a chance to come back. Everything is basically all right, but the system just needs a little time to make some "orderly adjustments." Indeed, "there is a negligible risk of permanent default by major sovereign borrowers." (There's the phrase apparently borrowed from the vice chairman of Chase.) "Permanent" default is a new financial concept that the Secretary did not bother to define. While the risk is negligible, "some net new lending will be required" to permit the "establishment of economic adjustment programs in key borrowing countries."

The I.M.F. works closely with governments in order to "help identify the causes of their economic problems and to identify the appropriate economic policy adjustments." Together, they develop a stringent program to restore domestic and external health. Usually the program includes higher taxes, less spending, lower subsidies for food, lower subsidies for industry, and currency devaluation—all designed to increase exports and reduce imports. In a word, austerity.

A Mexican peasant may think things are pretty austere already. He may think the I.M.F. program is designed to secure funds for foreign bankers. The problem is that the I.M.F. programs do what they are intended to do. They increase unemployment, reduce growth, and lower a standard of living that is marginal to begin with. Third worlders say, "An application to the I.M.F. is a recipe for a coup d'état."

ALL THIS MIGHT go down if the Mexicans or Brazilians or Argentinians thought the debt was fairly incurred to begin with. But it's very clear that they don't think so. Not unreasonably, they think they are victims of a lot of horsing around beyond their control. They couldn't stand up to the Arabs, but the U.S. could and didn't. They think at least half the debt is not real debt, but unconscionable interest that has piled up because of a U.S. experiment with the theories of Milton Friedman. Much of the borrowing was by corrupt regimes for their own purposes, which included oppressing the people now asked to pay. Almost all the loans were made by bankers who must have known they were far beyond the capacity of the country to repay.

The continuing erosion of Western wealth to keep in power Communist governments who threaten our liberties is suicidal. The last argument on behalf of the merry-go-round is that if it stops, a lot of players will get scrambled. Without question, many governments will be shown the door by their people. But failed governments should be replaced. The U.S. has no interest in stabilizing Communists, military dictators, and other rulers whose people don't want them. Propping up repressive regimes on the chance they may cooperate with the bankers is not an American aspiration. Nor is the use of U.S. government muscle to collect bad loans for bankers.

The bankers say it is not their mistakes that have caused the trouble. In their view, the world has been inundated by a series of great waves. Impersonal forces, beyond anyone's control, produced inflation, recession, high interest rates, high oil prices, and low commodity prices. In fact, actual, identifiable people took specific actions that had predictable results. These men are responsible for the natural consequences of the decisions they made.

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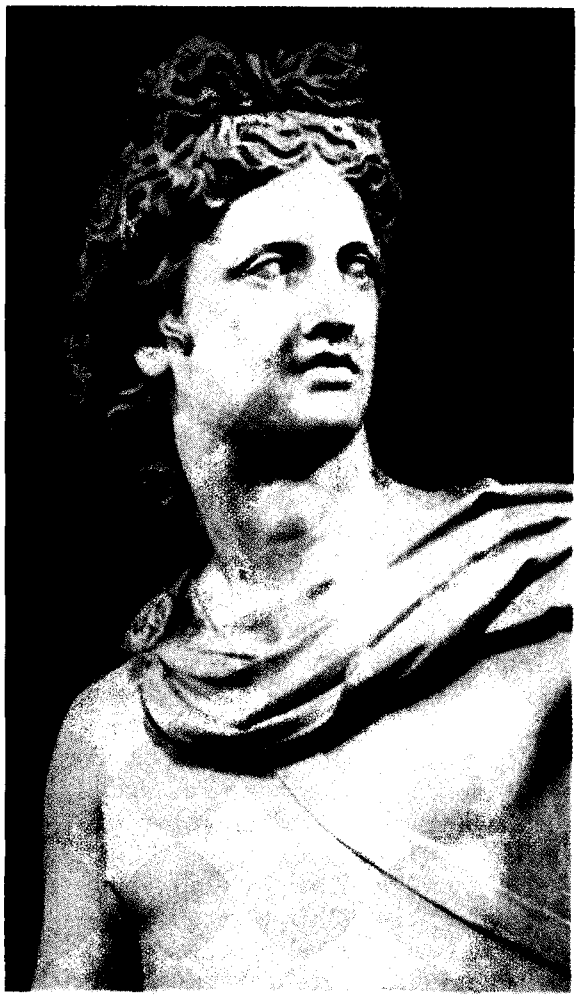

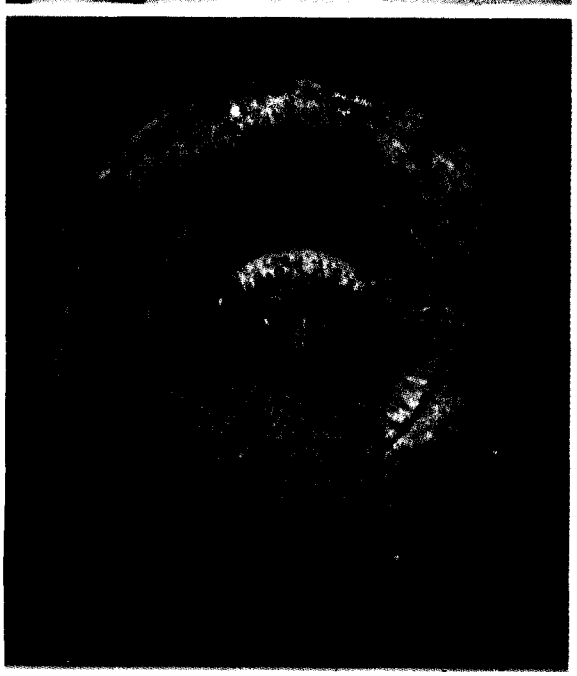

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(top left) APOLLO BELVEDERE. Roman copy, 130-140 A.D.
(bottom left) BORCHIA WITH HEAD OF ACHELOUS TARQUINIA. Bronze, 5th century B.C.
(center) MUSICAL ANGEL. Melozzo da Forlì, ca. 1480. (top right) ST. JEROME. Leonardo da Vinci, ca. 1480.
(bottom right) QUETZALCOATL. Aztec feathered serpent, early 16th century.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Small Film, Big Book

Those who saw the Hungarian film *Nine Months* (TNR, March 28, 1981) have at least one reason never to forget it: the leading actress, Lili Monori, herself gave birth on the screen as the woman in the film who was giving birth. But Monori has more gifts than fecundity. In *Women*, directed by Márta Mészaros, and in *Nine Months*, also by Mészaros, Monori showed insinuating power with privacies, the ability to conceal and reveal them simultaneously. We knew what was seething in her mind and heart at the same time that she kept it secret, or mostly secret, from those around her. A skinny young woman with a round, flattish, freckled face, she first provokes an extrinsic thought: about the producer or director who had the perception to cast her in her first film. She has very little initial impact. But after a short while, you and she are intertwined in secrets.

When Joseph Returns
(New Yorker Films)

Nine Months was about a young woman with quiet strength, firm resourcefulness. Now—a dubious term because her latest film to be shown here was made earlier—she plays a young wife shaken by loneliness into desperation. *When Joseph Returns*, directed in 1975 by Zsolt Kézdi-Kovács, opens with a bride, Monori, and her mother-in-law accompanying the groom, a merchant marine officer, to his ship. Then wife and mother-in-law return to the small Budapest apartment they share, and Monori really begins to realize what her life is going to be like: a series of long separations relieved by brief reunions with her husband. She is grateful for the older woman's company (we soon learn that Monori is an orphan who was raised in foster homes), but she simply is not proof against the emptiness, the promise of more emptiness. This state soon becomes panic that declines into despair that renders her susceptible to male advances.

The picture develops the story of her affairs, the effects of her listlessness on her job(s), her almost visible rot of unhappiness. But the center of the action is the relation between Monori and her mother-in-law, a divorcée, wisely and humanely played by Éva Ruttkai, an actress long loved—understandably so—in Hungarian theater and film. Ruttkai's character is no prude. She brings her own lovers home (and calmly asks Monori to go into the other room and stay there). And though Monori's behavior doesn't overjoy her, Ruttkai is not censorious about it: she understands the problem, and, as long as her son is not hurt or insulted, she makes no judgments. But, inevitably, troubles come; and are, without hemstitching, resolved. Near the end we see a shot of two hands side by side on an airport-balcony railing—Ruttkai's and Monori's—as the women watch Joseph leave his plane and walk toward them.

Clearly there is no neat ending because the situation that made the trouble is only understood, not removed. Kézdi-Kovács, his own screenwriter, has built a script that is, in a small-scale but sharp way, daring through all its movement and in its conclusion. He shows Monori no pity: she is almost unvaryingly selfish, ungrateful, frightened into self-gratification as a refuge. The last response he wants for her is conventional audience sympathy. It is left to Ruttkai and us to comprehend, not to bleed. And the final union between the two women will, we know, undergo further testing after Joseph leaves again.

Kézdi-Kovács is reading us no lesson. He is dramatizing, through a heightened set of conditions, some difficulties merely of living, in any country—whatever its politics: conditions that can crack acceptances of marital behavior and of social conformity. The subject has been well explored from the male view (all those husbands away from home); this time we see it from the other side.

This is Kézdi-Kovács's first film to be shown here, and it's overdue. He began as assistant to Miklós Jancsó on several films, but he shows none of Jancsó's influence. In complete contrast to Jancsó, he works with a rhythm of editing that is almost angular, abrupt, to underline the tensions in the story. He uses a cinematographer, János Kende, who has worked several times for Jancsó, and who also did both the Mészaros films. From the first shot, the masterly Kende instructs us in color: as presence, not as selling point.

But, with all deference, all gratitude, to the director, the cinematographer, the lovely Ruttkai, the film is brought to *being* by Monori. Her gangly, sexy walk, her enfolding of herself by herself, literally and otherwise, the quick burst of smile that is both generous and possessive, the banal suffering that she is able to make prototypical, the terrible explosions of hysterics, the way she can almost excise this young wife's nervous system from her body and display it—these are verities of pain. Here and in her roles for Mészaros, Monori has done nothing to make things easy for us. She is a wonderful bearer of bad news.

Just published: *The Macmillan Film Bibliography: A Critical Guide to the Literature of the Motion Picture* by George Rehrauer. Volume I, Reviews: $90 (969 large double-columned pages). Volume II, Index: $50 (532 similar pages). The set : $120. Both volumes are essential, but I suppose Macmillan is anticipating single replacements.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Parsifal. H. J. Syberberg's highly idiosyncratic view of Wagner's (complete) work. The ear is delighted, the eye surprised sometimes but always held.

Sophie's Choice. Meryl Streep's performance is the only reason—though a strong one—to see this collapsed rendition of an inflated novel.

Time for Revenge. An Argentine radical's clever vengeance on the System. Twisty, tight, well acted and directed.

Tootsie. Almost as good as they say. Dustin Hoffman is just as good as they say.

SK

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An immense work, immensely useful. Rehrauer, who teaches at Rutgers, has previously published three bibliographical works in this field, "portions of which were integrated into these volumes." Volume I has 6762 entries, covering eighty years of publication in English, arranged alphabetically by title; almost all entries carry comments ranging from a sentence or two to a few paragraphs. Volume II contains three indexes to the first volume: by subject, by author, and an index of published screenplays. Rehrauer's work surpasses any comparable bibliography that I know, but I emphasize that it deals only with books. For magazine articles, one still needs *The Film Index* (1941), *The New Film Index* (1975), and *The Critical Index* (1974).

I tried to determine how much time Rehrauer has spent reading these books —or, as he says, most of them—in order to comment on them. Arbitrarily I fixed a reading speed of a minute a page, an average of 200 pages per book, and eight reading hours a day for seven days a week, but my pocket calculator went up in smoke. Anyway, there are at most 6760 items, not 6762. Item 5016 repeats 5015: 6241 repeats 6240. (And there's a light salting of typographical errors.)

I spent only a couple of hours sampling the work, and I wish Rehrauer had spent less time reading the books in his list. His comments, as criticism, are not much help. (I'm being ungrateful, I know: a few bouquets are tossed my way.) His comments seem mostly to be of three kinds: warm recommendation, as with *Agee on Film*; warnings of difficulty, as with Leo Braudy's *The World in a Frame* ("The qualified reader will find a text with thought, idea, concept, and suggestion. Others may be somewhat discouraged by the mental effort required"); and evasion, as with one of the best recent film books, Allen Thiher's *The Cinematic Muse* ("The influential filmmakers such as Bunuel, Bresson, Clair, Vigo, etc., are evaluated critically"). If Rehrauer had limited himself only to data about each book, even more data could have been included, and the generally feeble estimates would not have been missed. He says in his introduction that he included his critiques only to guard his work against pilfering by other bibliographers; this personally motivated stratagem flecks the book for its user.

But there will, and should, be many users. Anyone who has ever wondered whether there is a book in English on a film subject or what the precise title of X's book is or whether a screenplay is available, is well served here. And riffling produces rewards. Item 6240/6241, for instance, is *Twenty-five Years of Films*, published by an English critic named G. R. Doyle in 1936. I'd never heard of him or his book and would like to read firsthand observations on those years.

I hope that, at regular intervals, with or without critical comment, Rehrauer will update his work. No self-respecting library, general or specialized, can be without this set. Anyone concerned with film who has $120 to spend—if that statement isn't oxymoronic—will get great use of it.

"Who am I, whence do I come that I am as I am . . .?"

Thomas Mann In His Diaries

By Erich Heller

There is nothing unusual in keeping a diary. It is certainly the least reprehensible among all the signs of a person's attaching importance to himself. A diary is a kind of private bulwark against the inroads made upon the memory by time. On the grander scale of nations, or even of mankind, historiography serves the same purpose. The work of Thuycidides, the Old Testament, as well as the histories written in nineteenth-century Germany during its Romantic period—all are concerned with the sense of national identity, creating, fostering, extolling, or debating it. Indeed, it is the question of identity that lurks behind all the events, experiences, thoughts, trivial or weighty, recorded by the diarist. Why is "identity" so highly prized that the loss of it is looked upon as the severest pathological affliction of the mind?

"Who am I?" is the central question of every autobiography, and a diary is nothing if not the raw material for the potential self-representation of a person. "Who am I?" Thomas Mann asks in his *Meditations of an Unpolitical Man*, and it was consuming doubts about "who he was" that, among many other doubts, compelled him, during World War I, to spend three years and six hundred pages on this question and all its ramifications, interrupting thereby his work as a novelist, in particular the writing of *The Magic Mountain*. Yes, certainly, he was a novelist, close even then to being acknowledged as Germany's greatest writer. He had produced *Buddenbrooks*, the book that was on its way to becoming the country's best known and most widely read novel—the rarest of successes for a book on so vast a scale and on so high a literary level. Immediately afterward he had written *Tonio Kröger*, the intellectual idyll that soon won the enduring affection of its readers, especially those of the younger generation; and a few years later he published *Death in Venice*, the story that, like no other serious book of the time, instantly became a resounding success and was felt to be a deeply stirring challenge. Although it was conceived in 1911 as an utterly unpolitical story, inspired as it was by a very private experience, it vibrates with the tremors of the approaching catastrophe, the 1914 war. In any case, the yearning that the adolescent Thomas Mann once dared to pronounce publicly in an immature poem: the dream of one day being crowned with a little laurel wreath, had long since come true; and the "little wreath" proved rather sumptuous. That by 1914 he was a much-admired writer and a celebrated artist was an indisputably correct answer to the weighty question: "Who am I?" Thousands of aspiring young people would be supremely satisfied with it. Not so Thomas Mann. He now had to write a book, he said, which, though the work of an artist, was in his own judgment by no means a work of art: the *Meditations*. The artist who wrote it was a man

> whose existence was shaken to its foundations, whose self-respect was brought into question, and whose troubled condition was such that he was completely unable to produce anything else.

Erich Heller, Avalon Professor Emeritus of the Humanities at Northwestern University, is the author of *The Artist's Journey Into the Interior* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and *Franz Kafka* (Viking).

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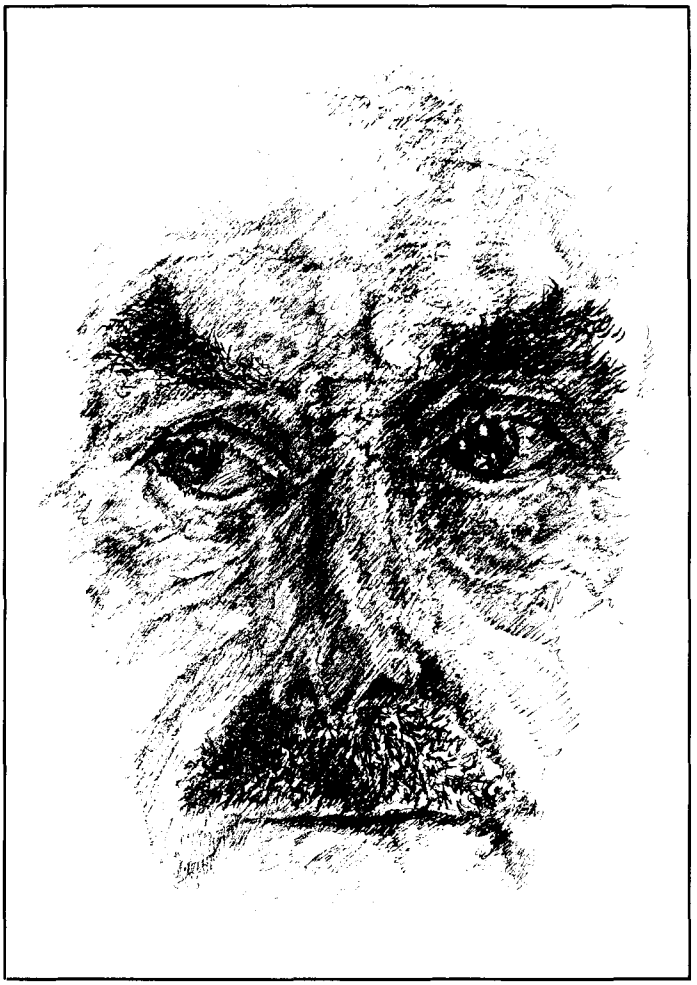
The sincerity of this is unmistakable as well as the intense pressure that had given rise to it: "Who am I?"

It signaled a crisis and asked a question that any thinking and feeling person may have to face during some period of his life: in times, above all, of an agonizing loss or public upheaval. For Thomas Mann, the upheaval was the war in which, as he firmly believed, Germany, his Germany, had to win, not only in order to ward off its own military defeat but to save its *Kultur*, the culture that was his as much as it was the culture of Aschenbach's, the writer of Thomas Mann's creation and his alter ego in cholera-infested Venice, who one day wakes up from a chaotic Dionysian dream "with his moral existence annihilated." And Thomas Mann's loss was that of his close, if always precarious, friendship with his older brother Heinrich, his respected fellow novelist at the beginning, but later, with the onset of the war, the hated *Zivilisationsliterat* of *Meditations*, the "un-German" champion of the West, of "civilization" as against "*Kultur*," of political rhetoric as against musical inwardness, of democratic enlightenment as against the metaphysics of art: "There is no longer any other word for him but idiot," Thomas Mann noted in his diary as late as January 20, 1919. The occasion seems to have been Heinrich's proclaiming somewhere that now at last, in defeated Germany or revolutionary Russia, "thought and art are going hand in hand with government." Although the brothers later became reconciled, the scars left by the fraternal war never disappeared completely.

The *Meditations* are themselves a compendious intellectual diary of the writer's existence as he saw and defended it in the years of World War I. It is an agitated and fascinating book, beautifully written and, as a logbook of a rich mind's journeys, restless in its organization. Yet there was still room for a diary not meant for publication. Secrecy is what distinguishes the "real" diaries from those that, "literature" themselves, are from the beginning intended to be published. It is most unlikely that Thomas Mann would have divulged to anyone those many "secret—*very* secret" things that made him burn the diaries of his early years in the winter of 1896, when he was twenty-one. He reported this to a childhood friend, advising him to do the same: "One is, as it were, rid of one's past and cheerfully lives in the present," without having to fear that the "very secret" secrets would become known to others. Strange, this liberation from the past, the chronicling of which is the diarist's sole purpose. Not so strange is that he soon embarked upon keeping a new diary. It multiplied in the course of the years; for it was a sizable compendium that had accumulated between 1896 and February 11, 1933 when, leaving it safely, as he believed, in his Munich villa, he went, accompanied by his wife Katia, on a lecture tour abroad—never to return to his house. Hitler came to power during his absence. Soon he realized that his exile would not be over in a few days or even weeks, and with that realization, *beginning a new diary*, he also began to worry about the fate of the old ones. His worries were justified: they fell into the hands of the Gestapo.

How this happened is a story of 1933-Germanic intrigues and officially sponsored crimes. In early April he sent his son Golo a key to the safe and asked him to place the diaries, without reading them, in a trunk (what a voluminous collection it must have been!) and have them shipped to him in France. They were late, very late in arriving. The trusted family chauffeur in Munich, so Golo decided, was to look after the dispatch of the trunk at the railroad station. The chauffeur saw to it that they made their way to the Secret Police. Small wonder they were not received in time. Upon learning what had happened, Thomas Mann was frantic with apprehension. On the last day of April the compulsive diarist noted in his new diary: "My fears now revolve first and foremost, almost exclusively, around this threat to my life's secrets. They are deeply serious. The consequences could be terrible, even fatal." The apparently highly explosive piece of luggage finally arrived at the end of May, thanks to the adroit maneuvering of the family's Munich lawyer. (Conditions in Germany deteriorated rapidly after these first weeks of the deplorable new masters' regime. Soon no advocate's skills would have persuaded them to release their easy prey.) With the exception of the notes he had written between September 1918 and December 1921, these "deeply serious," indeed "fatal" documents came to share the fate of their earlier companions in secrecy. After twelve years and two far-reaching family moves—from Switzerland to Princeton and then to California—the author threw them into the incinerator behind his house in Pacific Palisades. The notes he reprieved concerned the end of Imperial Germany and the initial years of the Weimar Republic. He knew he would need them one day. He did—for *Doctor Faustus*. Some of



THOMAS MANN BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

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them were even published before: in the limited edition of the slender volume *Leiden an Deutschland*, a title that might have been invented by a previous exile, Heinrich Heine. It appeared in 1946 in Los Angeles.

Leiden an Deutschland (Sorrowing over Germany), purged no doubt of all-too-private entries, also provides a highly significant example of the insecurity and ambivalence of Thomas Mann's political judgments. The diary of 1933 speaks, apropos the Leipzig trial of the presumed incendiaries of the Reichstag, of the "kinship, yes, even the identity of National Socialism and Communism" (November 24). This is not only left out in *Leiden an Deutschland* but actually replaced by

> 'Fascism or Communism—it makes no difference?'—Nonsense. Although Communism would not provide the right atmosphere for me to live in, it would allow me to exist, would not bestially kill me, indeed we would mutually respect our humanitarian concerns.

Stalin then administered the humanitarian concerns of Soviet Russia.

THE DIARIES of Thomas Mann: twice destroyed, once because they contained secrets, "very secret" secrets; another time anxiously—and expensively—wrested from the clutches of a ruthless secret police because the secrets in them were so "weighty" that they might have had, in those new political conditions, "fatal" consequences; and yet begun anew after each conflagration. What is the source of such compulsion? On one level it is the paradox of a man who knows that he is, like every human being, an ultimately incommunicable self and, as a modern writer, at the same time this self's embarrassingly omnipresent observer; a man who is, therefore, driven to articulate, at least to himself, what by its nature is inarticulate and, therefore, unavoidably secret. This leads to the confusion of his taking the diary articulation of socially concealed desires to be a help in illuminating to himself the dark ground of selfhood. Of course, he is bound to be puzzled himself by this compulsive enterprise.

During the days of the turmoil that invaded his life immediately upon leaving Germany, the diaries, he says, are "a comfort and support" to him. He may not necessarily have read them again, but just then they enabled him to take stock and achieve perspective. On another occasion, much later, he asked himself whether he wished that the world should come to know him as thoroughly as possible upon his demise; and certainly, in the end, he saw to this by decreeing that the diaries could or should be opened twenty years after his death—and this meant, of course, published. Elsewhere he sees them even as a prayer-like communion. Nothing in the diaries can possibly bear out this ambitious characterization. Besides, communion with what, with whom? And if it was to be, as he also hinted, a matter of bestowing eternity upon the fleeting moment, the artist who wrote on one parcel of these diaries (1933-1951) "without any literary value" knew only too well that there was only one way of arresting the relentless flux of time and giving it permanence—or at least the highly comforting and noble illusion of permanence: making works of art. However disagreeable a dental treatment may be, or time-consuming a visit to the barber, or tiresome an upset stomach, or irritating the inadequate plumbing installations in a southern *albergo*, they are deserving, perhaps, of the attentions of a comic genius like Wilhelm Busch, but hardly, in the raw, of the "permanence" of print. There exist only grotesque relations between constipation and eternity.

Homosexuality is, undoubtedly, a more serious theme in the life of a happily married man and father of six children. But which perceptive reader of Thomas Mann's work would not have known of his erotic ambivalence? Tonio Kröger's love for fair, blue-eyed Hans Hansen may still be regarded as perfectly "normal" for an adolescent. But we soon come upon middle-aged Aschenbach's Venetian—indeed "fatal"—passion for the beautiful boy Tadzio, or upon young Hans Castorp's enchantment with Przibislav Hippe, of which his later love for Clavdia Chauchat is merely an adult reenactment. Thus initiated, the reader will soon come to sense that Jacob's devotion to the Rachel-child Joseph is not entirely what a crudely distinguishing world would call purely paternal. And very little instruction is needed (one or another of the author's photographs suffices) to recognize the author himself in the Scottish Lord who, in *Felix Krull*, shyly but insistently woos the handsome "waiter" Felix. And who would not suspect that in the exuberantly outrageous love scene

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between Felix Krull and Diane Philibert "alias Madame Houpflé," a writer of novels "*qui sont énormément intelligents*," the "alias" may be replaced by quite another one, and even by a different gender? Does such a reader need the revelations of the *Diaries*? Does anyone?

SOME ARE "piquant" enough to deserve a place among the "very secret" matters that made Thomas Mann destroy his diaries. There was, for instance, a time when he was much in love with his son Klaus, deeply disturbed by observing the boy in the nude "up to some nonsense" at his younger brother's bed; and was emotionally so preoccupied with this involvement—"Find it quite natural that I should fall in love with my son"—that his conduct as a husband demanded apologies to his wife Katia ("the serenity, love, and equanimity with which she takes this are remarkable"). Or he asked himself, upon coming to sit on a train journey "next to an attractive young man in white trousers" whether he was perhaps "once and for all done with women." Other confessions and reflections of this kind are touchingly naive, such as when he was smitten by the sight of a handsome young worker in a plant nursery, "bare to the waist" and was (Thomas Mann was close to sixty at the time) enraptured by the beauty of the youthful body, describing it in some anatomical detail. The "extraordinarily articulate" Madame Houpflé comes to mind as she rhapsodizes about Felix Krull's bodily charms even while she is in bed with him. Yet Thomas Mann is moved to the following meditation about his erotic attraction:

> It requires no fulfillment at all, neither intellectually nor physically. This is likely thanks to the influence of the reality principle on the imagination; it allows for the rapture, but limits it to just looking.

One cannot help remembering Aschenbach and Tadzio in *Death in Venice* where no Freudian vocabulary intruded and the "rapturous looking" led to the most celebrated *Liebestod* in modern German literature. *Death in Venice, Felix Krull*—these are not the only works of Thomas Mann that may be linked to quite "unliterary" entries in the *Diaries*. If a literary historian were to search for those links between "life" and "art" in the work of a writer who was inclined to deny such connections, he would certainly be indebted to some of the most blatant indiscretions of the *Diaries*. But is this sufficient proof of the diarist's wish to make them known? And then, without much preparation in the preceding pages of the *Diaries*, the reader is, almost suddenly, asked to puzzle over the relationship Thomas Mann asserts, on September 17, 1919, between his erotic tendencies and his most troublesome work: "... there is no doubt in my mind that 'even' the *Betrachtungen* (*Meditations of an Unpolitical Man*) are an expression of my sexual inversion." This is said at the very time when the ambivalent German nationalist who had done, as he once said, his war service by writing that book, is about to transform himself into a soldier of the Weimar Republic and thus ultimately into the exile who, in *this* role, is better known to the world than he is as a writer. It is as if he had forgotten what he had written in April 1917 to the same childhood friend whom he had told that his youthful diaries are no more: "Now I am suddenly able to find the *discreet forms and masks* in which I can show my experiences to people, while formerly I needed ... a secret diary." Clearly, the forms and masks, the discretion and metamorphoses, did not render the secret diaries superfluous.

HOW IS THIS autobiographical fury related to Thomas Mann/Tonio Kröger's apprehension that the art of the artist is fated to be at the expense of his "life," even to the cursed point where life becomes unlivable to him, in fact nonexistent? When he read to his wife from *Gesang vom Kindchen*, his rare exercise in hexameters that celebrated the recent birth of his youngest daughter, his wife "was very moved, and only objected to my describing our most intimate experiences. But it is these intimate things that are really the most universal and human. I don't know any such scruples" (German *Diaries*, January 10, 1919).

This is the extreme consequence of naturalism and psychologism and—with his customary ambivalence—he deplored on many an occasion the "unscrupulous" nonart perpetrated by writers in the name of naturalistic "truth." Still, when at the end of 1918, the year of that *Gesang*, he "dipped" into Tolstoy's diary and was sometimes repelled by it, he yet "thoroughly agreed" with the following: "The main purpose of art ... is this, that it tell the truth about the soul. ... Art is the microscope that the artist focuses on the secrets of his own soul, and that then *reveals to men the secrets common to them all*." "Very good," Thomas Mann applaudingly adds without remembering that it was this characteristic of the realistic novel which, after *Anna Karenina*, persuaded Tolstoy that, for moral and religious reasons, he should abandon the corrupting business of art. Tolstoy's "hysteria" (that abated before long) had healthy roots. For where indeed is the line to be drawn between having "no such scruples" and the threatened collapse of civilized living through the insistence of "souls" to express themselves uninhibitedly and enact all their secret drives? When civilization is *felt* to maintain itself only through taboos put up against the "universally human," it is ripe for death. For the "secret" of any culture lies in the delicate refinement of its "secretiveness" with regard to much that is only natural and "commonly human." Thomas Mann himself was to use the strongest possible words, his most inspired invective, when he tried to rouse an indifferent, opportunistic, or paralyzed world to realizing the horrors of a Germany awakening (*Deutschland erwache!*) to the chance of murderously living out her secret desires.

When in *Meditations of an Unpolitical Man* Thomas Mann asked the question, "Who am I, whence do I come that I am as I am, and am neither able nor willing to be anything else?" the first answer that came to his mind was that he was a child of the German burgherdom. He even believed he recognized his distant forebears when looking at the portraits of German citizens painted by Dürer or Holbein. Did he really? Their features, in their seriousness and dignity, betray nothing of the nervousness to which Thomas Mann's *Diaries* constantly testify. Only their "true being," their *character indelebilis*, shows in those pictures. Within their frames they look as if they knew very well "who they were" without even having to question their identity. The same would apply to the artists who painted them. Neither they nor those who were sitting for them would have understood what, for instance, Tonio Kröger worried about: the persistent dilemma between his being an artist *and* a burgher, a defective *Bürger* because of his art, and a shy artist for being a *Bürger*. Imagine their utter incomprehension as their prodigal son tells them that he is an artist, "often sick to death of having to represent what is human without myself having a share in it." They would, without saying a word, shake their heads, and by not saying a word teach us a lesson in the tyrannical nature of history, in the inescapable dictates of

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the *Zeitgeist*, the ever-changing qualities imposed by the spirits of the ages. Thus, perhaps, they would explain the irrepressible urge of the diarist Thomas Mann to include any triviality in his attempts to give permanence to the fleeting moment. How is this?

Tonio Kröger's distress has a long history or histories. It must have begun at times, impossible to determine with any accuracy, when art, probably more than once in the lives of peoples, their cultures, religions, and rituals, emancipated itself from the crafts that, even as they supplied aesthetically most pleasing objects and works, also served "practical" needs. For the "spiritual" made highly practical demands; for instance, it demanded places of worship worthy of the divine, sacred spectacles that would not offend the gods, God-pleasing churches and cathedrals He would not frown upon, and music that would be music to His ears. When art became Art, ultimately purposeless and even proud of having no "practical uses" apart from satisfying the creative urges of the artist and the aesthetic appetites of his clients, when the Parthenon became something merely to wonder at, the "alienated" artist had arrived. Finally there came the hour of little Tonio Kröger, Thomas Mann's early "alienated" artist, little when compared to grander ancestors, for instance Shakespeare. For it was Shakespeare who wrote also the great drama of the art that was only art: the art of acting. What is Hecuba to the actor? Surely not what the gods were to Antigone or even to the masked speaker who enacted her destiny. At one high moment of his imagination and art, Hamlet's actor sheds tears, real tears, over Hecuba's fate; at the next, returning to "life," he counts the money he has earned with his performance. To disown the "unreality" of the artist's existence, Shakespeare in the end made his Prospero bury the magic wand of his "so potent art" and gave him back to life with a prayer.

It is like the beginning of much modern aesthetic thought. The actor is, of course, Shakespeare himself, and the name of Hecuba stands for countless other names, names like Othello, Desdemona, and Iago; Hamlet, Gertrude, Ophelia, and Polonius; Shylock and Jessica, Macbeth and his Lady. Enough! Enough, surely to wonder who Shakespeare himself could possibly be. It is most fitting that so little should be known about the man himself even if he is not quite as anonymous as that bard

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who has no existence except through the deeds and adventures, the friends and enemies, of Achilles and Odysseus. In the glorious company of many a man of the Renaissance, Shakespeare is the first great artist of a new age. Having dwelt in so many minds and souls, he may in the end—and in the end was Prospero—not have known who he himself was. There are years and years and yet only a few steps that separate him from Schopenhauer's belief that the "true artist" must "disown for some time his whole personality and survive alone as . . . a medium of lucid visions"; from Keats's "wretched" confession that he is a poet, and *therefore*, has no identical nature; from Kierkegaard's melancholy diagnosis of the aesthetic person being condemned to never achieving ethical self-realization; from T.S. Eliot's "continual extinction of personality" as the condition for "the progress of an artist"; from Tonio Kröger/Thomas Mann's discovery that nobody may "pluck a single leaf from the laurel tree of art" without "paying for it with his life," his life as a definable personality. "Who am I?"

It is the desire nevertheless and against all odds to define and ultimately even reveal himself as a "real person" that accounts for Thomas Mann's pedantic zeal in keeping diaries (and vice versa, for the unprecedented eagerness of people to read publications of this kind: biographies, autobiographies, letters, diaries). It is as if this writer decided to refute his mind's persistent companion, Nietzsche, who wrote that "the perfect artist is for ever and ever shut off from all 'reality'." These *Diaries* abound with every imaginable and scarcely imaginable wavering and indecision, ambivalence, and contradiction; yet toothaches and indigestion, insomnia and sleeping tablets, haircuts, having tea with so-and-so—all these trivia are at least irrefutably, unironically, unambiguously "real."

THIS English translation (Harry N. Abrams, 512 pp., $29.95) is a considerably shortened version of the original German edition; certainly no reasonable person could have suggested to any publisher that text and notes be taken over in their exceedingly full German fullness. The selection, made and explained in his brief foreword by Hermann Kesten (the original German editor of *Tagebüche* was the immensely conscientious Peter de Mendelsohn), inevitably raises questions. His method was never to shorten diary entries but to omit many of them entirely. This debatable principle may, on occasion, have blurred the awkward impressions made by Thomas Mann's attempts to achieve a personal settlement with the hateful regime of Hitler. He went as far as to write a conciliatory letter to Hitler's Minister of the Interior for he "deeply needed a peaceful and dignified relationship" with Germany, as he notes on March 16, 1934, an entry omitted in the present edition of the *Diaries*. What Thomas Mann also needed, apart from peace with Germany, was the availability of his books there, the income from them, the "things," and the money he had left behind in Munich. As early as September 1933, when his children wanted him to write and publish a manifesto against the rule of Hitler, his *German* diary response was "yes, but the novel." The first volume of the *Joseph* tetralogy was to appear in November of that year, the second in March 1934. They did—inside Germany.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation by Sissela Bok

(Pantheon, 315 pp., $16.95)

Having disposed of *Lying* (Pantheon, 1978) Sissela Bok now turns to *Secrets*—but with a difference. Where she gave lying almost uniformly bad grades, secrets receive a much more balanced assessment. Indeed, her treatment is chronically judicious.

Mrs. Bok writes clearly and thinks systematically. The most striking thing about her book is the range of subjects she has been able to incorporate under the single rubric of secrecy. The book consists of seventeen essays, of almost identical length, each treating the role of secrecy in some particular area of human experience or endeavor. Thus there are chapters on self-deception, confessions, gossip, secret societies, as well as on secrecy in the professions, business, science, government, the military, journalism, and police work. The reader doesn't always escape the suspicion that these topics are only loosely connected. Moreover, rather too much of the argument is of the definitional or housekeeping variety—the sifting and sorting that enables the author to whisk various phenomena into one or the other of her seventeen moral cubbyholes.

Because Mrs. Bok is forever weighing pros and cons, her book often seems to lack a point of view. Nevertheless, I think it fair to say that when discussing secrecy in the personal realm she tends to stress its virtues, whereas when she turns to the public realm—whether in the professions or in government—she stresses its disadvantages. In private life secrecy appears to her an endangered species. It is endangered, first of all, by technological developments, such as sophisticated eavesdropping devices and elaborate data banks. More insidiously, it is endangered by the breezy ethics of openness, associated especially with popular psychotherapies that view all forms of discretion as a kind of psychological poison. Secrecy is thus to be valued, she suggests, as a protector of intimacy and privacy. But when secrecy is allied with power it becomes dangerous. This can occur even on the domestic front, when parents use secrets to manipulate children. But especially in such great public structures as professions, corporations, governments, armies, and police the alliance of secrecy and power is generally noxious. Mrs. Bok is no friend of the Reagan Administration's initiatives to limit the scope of the Freedom of Information Act.

Secrets suffers from two liabilities: primness and superficiality. Mrs. Bok is thoughtful, but she is rarely bold. There is a wearisome predictability about her judgments. She is on the right side of every issue: she opposes forced confessions, she has not a single good word to say for brainwashing, and she thinks secret societies that discriminate on ethnic or religious grounds are a bad thing. Such soporific probity makes one yearn

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for the moral audacities of an Oscar Wilde or a Friedrich Nietzsche, or even a Marquis de Sade. Furthermore, her proclivity for correct opinions brings her right to the verge of banality. Indeed, to tell the truth, she sometimes goes over the brink. Thus: "While not all secrets are discreditable, all that is discreditable and all wrongdoing seek out secrecy (unless they can be carried out openly without interference, as when they are pursued by coercive means)"—which I take to mean that wrongdoing is secret except when it is not. Nor is there much illumination to be gained when we read that "secrecy is dangerous and debilitating when it draws initiates into malevolent or unjust practices, such as violence directed against religious or racial groups." Admittedly, Mrs. Bok is generally more subtle, but such utterances, I would argue, are the inevitable byproduct of her uninflected reasonableness. Her book contains not a single extravagance.

ITS SUPERFICIALITY is perhaps a necessary concomitant of its broad scope: since she covers so many topics, she can't afford to linger over the nuances of any one of them. On those subjects that I know little about—industrial spying, for example—I did not sense that she was doing violence to the complexities involved, although an expert in the field might well feel otherwise. But on subjects to which I have myself given some thought, I was aware of a tendency to skim the surface and to avoid the most difficult questions. Let me give two examples: her discussions of confession and gossip—to both of which, I allow, I am more than a little addicted.

She assumes correctly (I believe) that most people entertain a naive presumption about the virtues of confession: it is the unburdening of a venomous story about the self, an act of courageous frankness, a vehicle of personal transformation. Needless to say, confession may be all of these, and the great literary confessions (to which Mrs. Bok intends to devote a later book) often manifest such qualities. Still, much remains to be said against confession. Mrs. Bok, however, squanders a good deal of her carefully budgeted space on several less interesting subtopics: she belabors the evils of forced confessions and recommends against disclosing the secrets of others (which isn't really confession at all but a form of gossip). She focuses on religious confession and its modern secular variant, psychoanalytical confession, but once again her attention is deflected from the more intriguing aspects of these subjects. Thus she frets about the trustworthiness of the person to whom the confession is made—the priest or the therapist—and suggests that the lack of reciprocity in such unburdenings is to be regretted.

Only briefly does she allude to the central paradox of confession, namely, when she notes of Rousseau that confession can be a higher form of concealment. In other words, confession is a performance, and it bears an exceedingly complex relation to the imperatives of secrecy and openness. To be sure, the confessor reveals himself, but only in a self-conscious and contrived fashion. Precisely here, one feels, is where our author should dig into her subject, for the interweaving of psychological and literary strategies in the "confessional mode" is endlessly fascinating. But about the seductiveness of confession and its potential for manipulation or aggression she has very little to say. Moreover, to the extent that she does address this aspect of her subject, her insights are remarkably crude. "Self-revelation becomes manipulative," she writes,

> when the unspoken aim is to secure from others some response they would otherwise restrain: confidences in return, or a bond that can be exploited, or some form of cooptation. Seduction is the aim of much self-disclosure of a manipulative nature.

But the psychological transactions of confessions are usually much more profound than the mean self-servingness here alluded to: the young woman who confesses to having been molested by her father is settling accounts of the most fundamental sort.

If Mrs. Bok is too glib about confession, she is too solemn about gossip. In this instance, of course, the presumption is that gossip is morally reprehensible, or at the very least a waste of time. As one might expect, she judiciously draws our attention to certain meliorating considerations: gossip, she argues, can sometimes be useful. And how is it useful? Primarily as a source of information. Gossip, for example, can serve to protect innocent young people from being exploited by the town drunk. In this exposition we are treated to some heavy anthropological

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breathing, to the effect that gossip is socially "functional." Nonetheless, Mrs. Bok is more comfortable rehearsing the evils of gossip. Most gossip, it seems, comes in two forms: malicious and trivial. Malicious gossip in turn can be divided into three varieties, all of them unacceptable: "gossip in breach of confidence, gossip the speaker knows to be false, and unduly invasive gossip." These are not very helpful categories. If breaching confidences is morally unacceptable, it matters little whether this occurs in the form of gossip or a public lecture. "Gossip the speaker knows to be false" is not gossip at all, since gossip without the presumption—or at least the probability—of truth is quite uninteresting, and no serious gossip would traffic in it. Finally, in seeking to determine what is "unduly invasive," Mrs. Bok ties herself in philosophical knots reminiscent of those that ensnared John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty*.

TRIVIAL GOSSIP is regrettable because "it substitutes personal anecdote for a careful exploration of ideas." One learns here that both Soren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger were critics of trivializing gossip—which I regard as prima facie evidence in its favor. Indeed, it even occurs to me that Martin Heidegger might have been both a clearer thinker and a better human being if he had gossiped more. Missing throughout this discussion is a sufficient appreciation that gossip is extraordinarily entertaining. Academics are masterly gossips, and I should have thought that as the wife of the president of Harvard, Mrs. Bok would be fully cognizant of its pleasures. But one of my colleagues—himself a skillful and genial gossip—thinks that presidents and provosts are too far removed from the dramatis personae of academic life to understand its charms. The people one gossips about must matter, and one must know enough about them for a particular piece of information to fit into a larger pattern. In any case, the proposition that gossip and intellectual seriousness are somehow mutually exclusive is preposterous. In my experience, the best gossips are the best scholars—and often the best teachers as well.

Absent in Mrs. Bok's examination of secrets is an adequate sense of their great drama. I associate this lack with the relative paucity of literary sources in her study. Her principal authorities are philosophers and social scientists. Had she spent more time with the great imaginative writers, her analysis would have been decidedly more incisive. One thinks, for example, of Fanny Price in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. The extraordinary tension and power of Austen's novel derive in no small part from Fanny's role as the keeper of secrets. She observes much and says little, and we, the reader, are both agonized and deepened by sharing in her secret knowledge. A similar—indeed, more explicit—exploration of secrecy and revelation occurs in Theodor Fontane's novel *Effi Briest*, whose turning point, significantly, occurs not when Effi's husband discovers her infidelity but when he reveals it to another man, an act, as he remarks, that forever alters its significance. One could perhaps argue that there is hardly any work of literature in which privileged information doesn't contribute significantly to the work's moral and dramatic effect, and in the greatest of them we are made to feel both the complexity and the burden of such knowledge. To its great disadvantage, *Secrets* fails to tap this rich vein of reflection about the place of concealment and revelation in our lives.

PAUL ROBINSON

THE MAKING OF A PROFESSION

The Social Transformation of American Medicine by Paul Starr

(Basic Books, 514 pp., $24.95)

> That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg, is enough to make one despair of political humanity.
>
> —George Bernard Shaw, preface to "The Doctor's Dilemma"

Health care is the durable rogue of the American economy. Politicians and scholars alike agree that the health care industry must not be permitted to enlarge its prodigious take of national wealth. Nonetheless, year after year, it usually does. In 1982 health care's rate of increase was nearly three times the average rise of other prices.

By all sensible measures, our overexpanded medical-education system is turning out too many doctors; still, medical school enrollments are at an all-time high. The chief alarmist about the glut, the U.S. government, though historically chary of a schoolmaster role, actually runs its own full-fledged medical school, the Pentagon's little-known but very expensive Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Then, too, the prowess of our hi-tech medicine is so renowned that even Soviet potentates have been known to slip into our great university medical centers for bodily repair—often passing through surrounding black ghettos where the infant-mortality rate is twice the national average.

How did we get into this predicament, where $300 billion is spent every year, while relatively simple, inexpensive troubles go untreated? Why has health care proved so maddeningly immune to successive waves of earnest reformers, whether in the employ of Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, or Ronald Reagan?

These are questions that Paul Starr, a Harvard sociologist, takes up in *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, a striking feat of historical synthesis and sociological and political analysis—the definitive study of how American medicine got the way it is and why it has been so impervious to beneficial change. Happily, while Starr has properly attended to the requisite curlicues of academic scholarship, he has also produced a smartly written work the nonspecialist will find lucid and engaging.

Odd as it may seem now, when the medical profession thrives—and its trade journals advertise tax-shelter advice, holiday cruises, and pricey cars—doctoring was a relatively low-income, low-status calling, even late into the last century. The scientific techniques that eventually translated into medical effectiveness, professional status, and income were just stirring. Medical education, though increasingly centered in universi-

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ties, still included a bizarre patchwork of free-standing, profit-seeking trade schools. While licensing requirements spread through the states during the late nineteenth century, doctors were commonly those who called themselves doctors.

But changes that endure to this day were in the making at the turn of the century. Economic competition among warring sects of doctors was on the increase; so was competition for access to the increasingly important workshops of medicine—hospitals. Malpractice suits prompted doctors to huddle for protection; thus the county medical societies began to attract larger memberships, thereby strengthening their umbrella organization, the previously inconsequential American Medical Association.

As Starr points out, one issue remained to be resolved before mainstream medicine could sweep away its competitors: the overproduction of physicians. The boom in the number of medical schools had vastly increased the number of doctors in the latter half of the nineteenth century. "At proprietary schools and some of the weaker medical departments of universities," Starr writes,

> the ranks of the profession were being recruited from workingmen and the lower middle-classes, to the dismay of professional leaders, who thought such riff-raff jeopardized efforts to raise the doctor's status in society.

BECAUSE of lack of capital and paying students, shrinkage of the schooling system was already under way when the A.M.A. initiated the famous Flexner Report of 1910, which recommended upgrading American medical education. After that, the A.M.A. effectively gained state-by-state accrediting power over education. With that power came primacy for the A.M.A.'s central dogma: physician dominance of health care, low status and limited resources for public-health services, one-on-one fee-for-service doctoring, and the exclusion of competing professions and interests from doctor-patient relations. While the capital requirements of other technically based workers made it impossible for them to resist corporate engulfment, the medical profession put the nation's hospital system at its economic disposal by arrogating to itself free-lance status in these costly institutions. Hospitals didn't—and most still don't—practice medicine. Rather, they provided places where medicine was practiced by independent entrepreneurs.

How did American medicine pull it off? The answer, Starr suggests,

> lies in the inability of corporate enterprise to insert itself successfully between producer and consumer in medical care under the economic conditions that prevailed in the early twentieth century. . . . The doctor's cultural authority and strategic position in the production of medical care create a distinctive power base. . . . The hospital itself also did not stand between the doctors and the market. On the contrary, the doctors came to stand between the hospital and its market. This was the source of doctors' control of hospitals as hospitals increasingly depended on payment by patients rather than on bequests and donations.

The sovereignty of the legal profession would seem to invite comparative examination, but in an otherwise richly detailed and expansive work, Starr doesn't allude to lawyers.

Secure in its dominance over education, hospital usage, ancillary health personnel, and economic relations with its customers, the American medical profession easily overcame challenges to its sovereignty. Thus, public clinics, a technologically satisfactory way of organiz-

MR. BROWN

He came from a small town in downstate Illinois,
and couldn't believe it when his city students
laughed at the notion that you could hear the corn grow
on soft summer nights. He got me to eat
a fried grasshopper once. His chuckle came low and bland
from inside his sheath of baby fat; his eyelids
were neatly, symmetrically pursed, like the valves of a clam.

Between assurances that our easily sliced-up
flatworm, named Elvis,
would regenerate in days, he was the class
matchmaker. He gave us shyer ones lists of girls
to ask to the Prom; and then—as no adult
had ever spoken to me—"Who knows? You might
give it all up, get married, go and work
in the steel mills. That's the power of your chemistry.
I mean the chemistry of your body, of course."

No date that time. But later, the thought of smokestacks
in South Chicago, across the dreamlike gulf
from the school towers,
helped bridge the other gulf when Karen, dancing,
said in her sensible voice, "Hold me closer,"
as if it were no more than Mr. Brown showing me
a firmer way to shake hands . . .

When the jocks started saying, "Brown's a homo"
in the locker room, I thought with stricken loyalty,
if he is, I must be too; then when he crooked a finger
under my belt buckle, talking in the hall,
a holy dread . . .
till tamed by absence, though never listed
matter-of-factly among "gay" friends, he stood,
a kind of Terminus, or excluded Moses, over
the long descent to where we are ropes, ribbons
bird shrill electric outlets dizziness
like the first seawater's suddenly waking presence
somehow jelled from the sun. . . .

ALAN WILLIAMSON

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ing and delivering health care—given adequate resources—were professionally denigrated and financially shortchanged. Led by an A.M.A. ever alert for intrusions on professional sovereignty, the medical enterprise would occasionally flirt with national health insurance, but invariably shun it as a benighted anti-American scheme. (In 1949, in a feat of as-yet-unreplicated scholarship, the A.M.A. attributed to Lenin the thought that "Socialized medicine is the keystone to the arch of the Socialist State.")

AS POSTWAR pharmaceutical and technological developments increased the efficacy and cost of medical services and inspired visions of healthful longevity, there was a rapid increase in health-insurance schemes. The medical professions responded by insisting that the new economics conform to the traditional doctor sovereignty. "The rise of private insurance," Starr writes,

> added to the market power of the profession. Although licensing laws were the original means of restricting entry into medical practice, eligibility for reimbursement now became the chief obstacle for any competing group of practitioners. Even if midwives or chiropractors could circumvent licensing laws, they usually could not get reimbursement from Blue Shield . . . . The insurance companies used the doctors as gatekeepers to benefits.

The same system of traffic control was adopted in the mid-1960s when horrifying inequities in access to health care led to the enactment of Medicare for the elderly and Medicaid for the poor. Doctor sovereignty, increasingly allied to the hi-tech, high-cost hospital industry, meant that financing was on the basis of Pentagon-style cost-plus reimbursement, rather than set fees for given procedures. Furthermore, while the Social Security Administration paid the federal share of the bills, reimbursement and auditing services were farmed out to the medical profession's obedient servant—the insurance industry. Given a blank check, the health-care industry obeyed the laws of the marketplace, and went on a spending spree. Thus the cries of crisis, prophecies of collapse, and exhortations for reforms of one sort or another.

In fact, the crisis has arrived in the form of cutbacks in health programs for the poor, the elderly, and the unemployed. Thus the remarkable egalitarianism in access to health care that began in the mid-1960s is receding. But collapse? That seems quite unlikely, given the fact that health care is one of our few remaining growth industries: employment was up by 5 percent last year, the total spending on health care hit a record high—and there's nothing in sight to prevent a repeat this year or next.

There is, however, a new force moving across the American medical landscape —the health-care corporations, with their lengthening chains of profit-seeking hospitals and other service facilities. Noting their growing strength, the anticipated overabundance of new medical graduates, and increased public skepticism toward the authority of traditional medicine, Starr ends on a gloomy note:

> The organizational culture of medicine used to be dominated by the ideals of professionalism and volunteerism, which softened the underlying acquisitive activity. The restraint exercised by these ideals now grows weaker. The 'health center' of one era is the 'profit center' of the next . . . .
>
> This turn of events is the fruit of a history of accommodating professional and institutional interests, failing to exercise public control over public programs, then adopting piecemeal regulation to control the inflationary consequences, and, as a final resort, cutting back programs and turning them back to the private sector.

A sound diagnosis; a plausible forecast. But as so often in health politics, feasible remedies are elusive. Starr concludes with the observation that the future of health care "depends on the choices that Americans still have to make." But the sad message of his book is that the opportunities for choice have become extremely limited.

DANIEL S. GREENBERG

Daniel S. Greenberg is editor and publisher of a Washington-based newsletter, *Science & Government Report*, and writes a syndicated column on science and health politics. He was formerly Washington correspondent of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

THE LADIES AND THE TIGER

Right-Wing Women
by Andrea Dworkin

(Coward-McCann, 237 pp., $14.95; Perigee, 255 pp., $6.95 paper)

Why are so many women on the right side of the political fence? Why are so many men, for that matter?—but Andrea Dworkin, author of several other books on feminist topics, prefers to treat women as a separate issue.

The usual explanation offered for women's conservatism, she says, is that their childbearing, child-nurturing role encourages them to stick to the safe, to the status quo. In a paragraph that demonstrates at once the best and the worst of this book (the best being its energetic pounces upon old axioms, the worst being its tendency to harangue), she refutes that explanation:

> This theory, or slander, is both specious and cruel in that, in fact, women are forced to bear children and have been throughout history in all economic systems, with but teeny-weeny time-outs while the men were momentarily disoriented, as for instance, in the immediate postcoital aftermath of certain revolutions. It is entirely irrational in that, in fact, women of all ideological persuasions, with the single exception of absolute pacifists, of whom there have not been very many, have throughout history supported wars in which the very children they are biologically ordained to protect are maimed, raped, tortured, and killed. Clearly, the biological explanation of the so-called conservative nature of women obscures the realities of women's lives, buries them in dark shadows of distortion and dismissal.

True, she says, women do tend to be traditionalists, but that's out of fear of male violence; and the right makes use of that fear. It promises to protect women by offering "form, shelter, safety, rules, and love." In addition, it posits an outside enemy, whether black or foreign or Jewish or homosexual, to direct women's anger and frustration away from the men in their immediate lives.

In a chapter called "The Coming Gynocide," the grim future predicted for

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the aging in America is redefined, logically enough, as the future for aging women, since it's mostly women who live to be old. For the same reason, the patients in those nursing homes that everyone deplores are also women—ditched because they no longer serve a reproductive function, Andrea Dworkin says; though that seems a roundabout reason in a country where loss of economic function is a much greater sin. And finally, even younger women face a subtle form of annihilation—if not through poverty and an appallingly discriminatory welfare system, then through the widespread, casual prescription of mood-altering drugs for everything that troubles women, from menstrual cramps to abusive husbands.

WHEN SHE sticks to the particular, Andrea Dworkin makes her points well. She's good on specific issues, particularly abortion. (Why is it, she wonders, that men so often infer their own deaths from the death of a fetus—as in, "If abortion had been available to my mother, I might not be standing here today"?) She offers a crisp, amusing summary of the careers of Marabel Morgan, Anita Bryant, Ruth Carter Stapleton, and Phyllis Schlafly. (Marabel Morgan teaches "how to cater to male pornographic fantasies in the name of Jesus Christ." Phyllis Schlafly "might be viewed as that rare woman of any ideological persuasion who really does see herself as one of the boys, even as she claims to be one of the girls.") And her own personal recollection of arguing with anti-E.R.A. delegates is a combination of scary and funny:

> Are you really saying, I asked slowly and clearly and loudly (so that the women delegates could continue to overhear the conversation), that if homosexuality were openly visible as a sexual possibility or if there were homosexual teachers in schools, everyone would choose to abandon heterosexuality and the family? Are you really saying, I asked carefully and clearly and slowly, that homosexuality is so attractive that no one would choose the heterosexual family over it? He stared at me, silent, a long time. I am afraid of violence and the Klan, and I was afraid of him. I repeated my questions. "You're a Jew, ain't ya," he said, turned away from me, and stared straight ahead.
>
> [A] Utah delegate said she attended the convention because she did not want her tax money to go to pay for abortion. I asked her about Viet Nam War tax resisters: they withheld taxes because they did not want their money to pay for the war; did she withhold taxes to keep her money from paying for abortion? Yes, she said. Then, as an afterthought, she said that actually she didn't pay any taxes at all. Did her husband pay them, I asked. She thought so.

The problem is that for the most part, *Right-Wing Women* avoids the particular and makes generalizations so sweeping that the reader blinks and draws back. "All housewives are economically exploited; all working women are," we're told. And "Girls are taught in order to make them compliant: intellectual adventurousness is drained, punished, ridiculed out of girls." (Notice she doesn't say "some girls," or "many girls," or even "most girls." Just "girls," period.) And, "Neither men nor women believe in the existence of women as significant beings."

> Using both force and threat, men in all camps demand that women accept abuse in silence and shame, tie themselves to hearth and home with rope made of self-blame, unspoken rage, grief, and resentment.

That these statements are true in some situations, some of the time, anyone with eyes must admit; but it would be foolish to claim they were universally true. Yet *Right-Wing Women* acknowledges no exceptions; it makes broadside pronouncements. Its language is florid—often beautiful, as a matter of fact, very like a sort of martial poetry, but it's far too emotionally charged for a political analysis.

AND THERE'S a strangely limited view of men. "Only women die one by one," Andrea Dworkin says, implying that men die . . . how? In grinning comradely gangs, perhaps. She tells us that women feel, "Without the children, I am not worth much," and many women do feel that; but then, of course, many men feel the same way: if not for their children, who require a breadwinner, they're afraid they wouldn't be valued by their wives.

When Ruth Carter Stapleton is accused of being a witch, "in typical female fashion Stapleton disclaims responsibility for her own inventiveness and credits the Holy Spirit, clearly male," we're told, as if generations of male religious leaders had not done the same thing, surely not "in typical female fashion." If a man had written that line, wouldn't we call it prejudice?

And finally: While attempting to interview a group of anti-E.R.A. delegates from Mississippi, Andrea Dworkin wore a T-shirt and overalls. She was snubbed. It goes against the grain to make apologies for anti-E.R.A. delegates, but the fact is that a male reporter in a T-shirt and overalls, approaching the same little group, would almost certainly have suffered the same treatment. That episode belongs not in *Right-Wing Women* but in another work entirely—Alison Lurie's *The Language of Clothes*.

There is plenty to think about in this book. Much of it is intelligent, original, deeply felt. In order to accept it part and parcel, though, you would have to accept its pervasive sense of a world where the sexes exist in an unremitting tooth-and-nail relationship; where men and women have absolutely no hope of any genuine connection with each other; where they have never once experienced a disinterested, kindly affection for each other. And that is simply not true.

ANNE TYLER

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DEADLY IDEALIST

Michael Bakunin: Roots of Apocalypse
by Arthur P. Mendel

(Praeger, 528 pp., $27.50)

Michael Bakunin, best known as the father of revolutionary anarchism, ranged like a stormy petrel across the skies of nineteenth-century European history, becoming a legend in his own lifetime. Since then he has served as a constant inspiration to various dissident groups intoxicated by his inflammatory tirades and raging pronunciamentos, and his apocalyptic vision of a new world of total freedom and perfect social justice and harmony emerging after the old one—the existing one—has been thoroughly destroyed in an all-consuming revolutionary holocaust. The present writer saw with his own eyes, during the insurrectionary spring days of 1968 in Paris, the walls of the Sorbonne adorned with Bakunin's most famous slogan (in the original German): "*Die Lust der Verstörung ist eine schaffende Lust*" (the passion for destruction is a creative passion). Moreover, Bakunin was the great opponent of what he called, percipiently, Marx's "authoritarian Socialism" in the latter part of his life, and his ideas have continued to attract followers for this reason as well ever since.

Indeed, Professor Mendel tells us that he set out to write the present work because he found that the only other biography of Bakunin in English—E. H. Carr's skeptical and brilliantly written portrait—"did not take seriously enough Bakunin's contribution to freedom." From such words one infers that Professor Mendel himself was something of an admirer, if not a disciple; and he felt that Carr's rather mocking and ironic depiction did not do Bakunin sufficient justice. One wonders how anyone who had read Carr could really imagine that Bakunin had any interest in "freedom" as that word is understood in the Western democratic tradition. In any event, while setting out initially to correct Carr, Professor Mendel's own researches have caused him to swing round full circle. He now feels that Carr's book, as well as the other literature on Bakunin (of which there is a good deal, including a conscientious four-volume biography in Russian by the Old Bolshevik Yuri Steklov, who ended as a victim of Stalin), does not "take seriously enough his [Bakunin's] *threat* to freedom."

What has caused such a radical shift of heart and mind? It would appear that Professor Mendel, in digging into the sources of Bakunin's life for himself, has been appalled by the contrast he has found between Bakunin's words and deeds, the glaring discrepancy between his exalted vision of freedom and the taste for secret conspiracy that he also exhibits—his relish for envisaging the formation of small dictatorial groups who, remaining in the shadows, would exercise absolute control over whatever revolutionary outbreaks they managed to provoke, or over which they could gain control. At the same time he was excoriating Marx for his "authoritarian" control of the International, Bakunin was drawing up endless plans for such secret organizations, which existed, however, largely on paper and in his own grandiose fantasies. To make matters worse, he was always ready to go to any lengths with others (such as the notorious Sergey Nechaev, whose murder of an innocent student inspired Dostoevsky's *The Devils*), and agree to any and all means, no matter how terrible and Machiavellian, to attain his supposed revolutionary ends. This discovery of the underside of Bakunin is what set Professor Mendel against the man he had previously looked on, we may infer, with some sympathy.

Professor Mendel has thus set himself the task of explaining the fascinating, tumultuous, personally appealing, and self-contradictory character and career of Bakunin. He turns to psychoanalysis for aid in grappling with the anomalies of his personality. Psychobiography is no longer the rage it was several years ago, and he is somewhat defensive about his use of psychoanalytic categories; but he makes out a very good case for approaching Bakunin in such terms. For one thing, Bakunin was well known to have been sexually impotent; for another, it is quite clear that he harbored a pathological aversion to sexuality with an incestuous attraction to one of his sisters—an attraction from which he recoiled in horror while acknowledging its existence. As an exile in Siberia, he married a seventeen-year-old girl when he was forty-three, and lived quite peacefully with her to the end of his life while she had three children by an Italian lover who was also Bakunin's close friend and financial benefactor. Much of his early "subversive" activity as a young man, before he had acquired any genuine political interests, consisted in fighting the efforts of his family, and those of other acquaintances, to marry off their daughters, as well as keeping one of his sisters separated from her husband.

Professor Mendel rightly believes that such aspects of Bakunin's life should be given more prominence than they usually receive, and he analyzes them in the light of a complicated theory involving recent views about narcissism combined with standard Freudian oedipal doctrine. There is no need to follow him into the details of what, as he acknowledges himself, are highly speculative conjectures; but he summarizes his conclusions neatly in a final chapter. Bakunin, he says, "first completely rejected anything sexual, 'animal,' " and "then transferred this total rejection to society, because it so inextricably involved—directly (sex, marriage) and indirectly (power, responsibility)—that oedipally repulsive 'animal' world. Finally, he disguised (and compensated for) the fear, weakness, and impotence by transmuting them into their opposites"—that is, into what Professor Mendel considers his ultimately futile revolutionary extremism that always led to disaster, and the fantasy world of immensely powerful but largely nonexistent secret societies.

There can be no question, it seems to me, that such a view of Bakunin helps to illuminate certain aspects of his life more sharply than previous accounts, and is a valuable contribution to our understanding of this enigmatic and flamboyant personality. No future study of Bakunin will be able to overlook the interpretation that Professor Mendel has presented, and his ample demonstration that the "roots" of Bakunin's obsessive vision of chaos and paradisal rebirth can be suggestively linked to a study of his psychic dilemmas. At the same time, though, it also seems to me that he rides his thesis too hard in wishing to make *every* aspect of Bakunin's life and activity merely a repetition-compulsion of his own private "psychodrama." If this were so, it would be difficult to explain his enormous influence; and Professor

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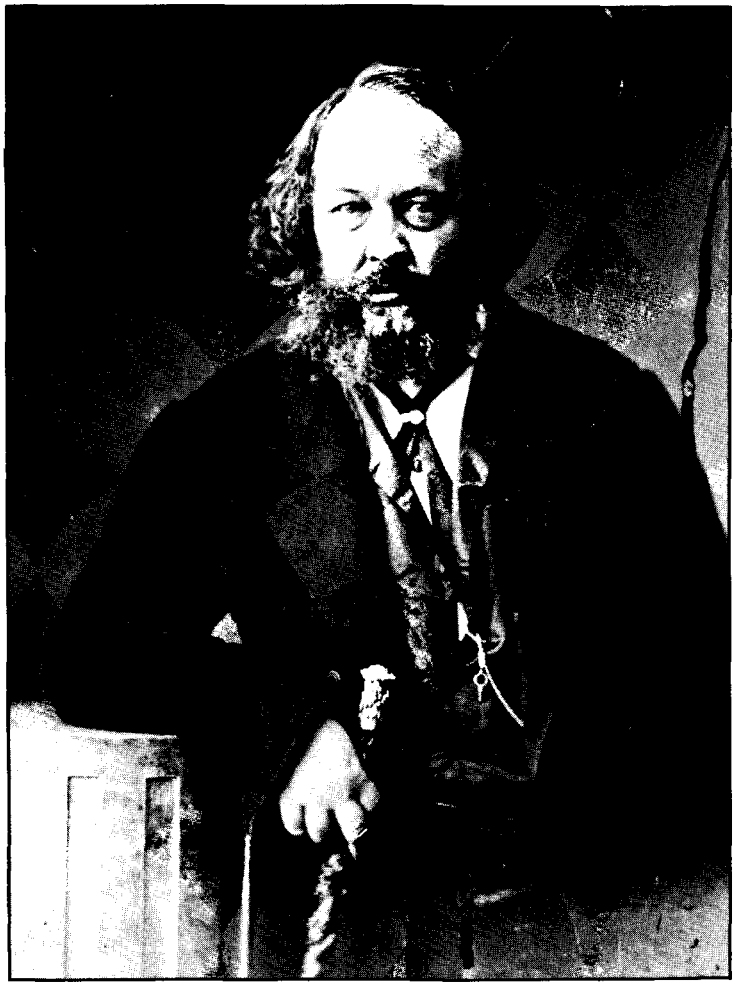
Mendel realizes that this influence poses something of a problem.

> Although [Bakunin] stages his dreams and nightmares mainly for his own therapy and even sanity (and no doubt experienced, as in all good theatre, the desired catharsis) countless others in search of similar self deception for whatever reason, eagerly mistook those dreams and nightmares for objective portraits of reality or serious designs for social change and acted accordingly.

Such a passage simply evades the crucial issue of psychobiography—the relation between the individual and his time—rather than attempting to grapple with it in some adequate fashion. The trouble lies in Professor Mendel's initial assumption that Bakunin, in his psychopathic recoil from a sexually charged "reality," had lost all contact with its true problems. But is this really so? And does he realize the full social implications of his implicit psychoanalytic postulate that an "acceptance" of "reality" is always desirable? Bakunin's refusal to follow a normal military career and to step into his father's shoes, for example, is seen strictly as evidence of psychic abnormality. But does this mean that there could be no good reasons for not wishing to serve Nicholas I, or for becoming a contented Russian landowner living off slave labor? And while Bakunin's untiring efforts to prevent marriages certainly were tied to his own sexual dilemmas, could he have exercised so much power over others if some of the women in question had not felt they were being forced into legal prostitution? Professor Mendel does not raise such questions, and thus seems to identify his psychoanalytic categories of "maturity" and "normality"—certainly without intending to do so—with an unthinking acceptance of whatever social and political arrangements existed at the time.

The same tendency to reductionism can be seen in his discussion of Bakunin's intellectual and philosophical evolution. Bakunin's adoption of various metaphysical and philosophical views is seen exclusively as a response to his own personal problems, though Professor Mendel does remark at one point, after quoting some Romantic effusions, that "we are encountering [in them] the mood of the age as much as we are aspects of Bakunin's personality." But he forgets this aspect of the matter very quickly, and fails to notice, in working out his psychoanalytic correlations of Bakunin's move from Fichte to Schelling, and then to Hegel and Left Hegelianism, that Bakunin was following exactly the same path as many of the other members of the generation of 1840 in Russian culture; he was by no means doing anything eccentric or original. This is why his famous article, "Reaction in Germany," was greeted with such enthusiasm, and hailed as a classic fusion of German metaphysics with French revolutionary ardor. Once more he coincides with "the mood of the age," and to analyze him *only* in psychoanalytic terms (however justified they may be) does not get us very far in explaining his impact.



MICHAEL BAKUNIN, 1863, COURTESY OF THE GRANGER COLLECTION

Similarly, one wonders to what extent many traits of Bakunin's character that seem "abnormal" to a psychology based on late nineteenth-century European assumptions about human behavior—for example, his refusal to soil his hands by earning money while living off the largesse of his friends—simply derive from the fact that he was a Russian nobleman for whom the idea of gaining his daily bread by the sweat of his brow was literally unthinkable. And Bakunin can also be seen as a typically Russian phenomenon in a wider sense as well: underground conspiracy and secret societies were a Russian tradition necessitated by the social conditions of the country, and it seems rather irrelevant to measure Bakunin, as Professor Mendel does, against a "norm" provided by Marx and the International. Nothing like the European working-class movement existed in Russia in Bakunin's lifetime, and to see his preoccupation with secret societies only as his way of "withdrawing" from the "real" political struggle is to overlook that he was a product of the Russian situation. His anarchism comes from a country where even loyalist Slavophiles could declare that the existence of the state, even though regrettably necessary, was an inevitable source of moral evil.

The main weakness of Professor Mendel's book is his refusal to entertain the possibility that Bakunin's inner drives could intersect in any way with the social-cultural and political "reality" of his time, and his rejection of any categories of explanation except the psychoanalytic. Although he does not manage to overcome this congenital defect of the genre of psychobiography, he offers a penetrating study of Bakunin within his own terms.

JOSEPH FRANK

Joseph Frank is professor of comparative literature at Princeton University and author of *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849* (Princeton University Press).

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THE LIFE BEFORE THE DEATH

Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust by Yaffa Eliach

(Oxford University Press, 266 pp., $15.95)

Catastrophe creates nobody. It takes lives that are already lived and changes them. Those who suffer, suffer specifically; their sufferings cannot be understood, therefore, if the specificity of their histories is not also understood. Too frequently it is not. Consider the case of what is called the Holocaust. Its victims are written about, and revered, but they are emptied of the content of the rest of their existence, and dated from the disaster. Yet they were not always victims; there was a time, though it hurts to say so, when they were only men and women in the middle of a multitude of human stories. There was a time when they enjoyed experience on an unenormous scale. Then these men and women were snatched from their stories, and from their scale, and collected into concentration camps. And they brought all their details with them—their loves and hates, their beliefs and their codes of behavior. You cannot understand what transpired in the camps unless you understand what transpired before them. Perhaps it is natural that the ordinary regard of others disappears before an event of such magnitude, natural to view the lives of these people always in the context of Auschwitz. It surely is not natural (and only by a miracle not a form of madness) to view Auschwitz always in the context of your own life, as these people do. What must it be like to have Auschwitz as a memory, to have it be first an event in your own history and then an event in the history of the century? Maybe its survivors cannot expect us to know. They can expect us, however, to have a sense of human specificity. They went to the camps and the ghettos, but they did not come from them; they came from families and communities and faiths and cultures. To know these people, start there.

One of the merits of Yaffa Eliach's hardly bearable and finally beautiful book is that it does just that. The tales she has collected are a victory over statistics, and much, much harder to slip by. By a combination of historical and literary skill, Mrs. Eliach has recovered the destruction of the Hasidim of Poland as it was for those who were being destroyed, and she has done so because she knows who they actually were. She knows their philosophical and social and religious particulars, and how they appeared in adversity. Flaubert's maxim is stood on its head: *le mal Dieu est dans le dêtail.*

Hasidism is a populist strain of Jewish mysticism that was founded in Poland during the eighteenth century, and in the course of the next century it became for millions of Jews a culture of enthusiasm and ecstasy. It is best known for its belief in the *tzaddik*, now known as the *rebbe*, the charismatic rabbi possessed of special powers of spiritual understanding and action; and it is least known for its intellectual achievements. (Buber contributed to the unfortunate stereotype of Hasidim as people who would rather sing than think.) The world of the Hasidim was a charged world, rich in custom, excited by emotion, addicted to miracle. Into this world came the *Einsatzgruppen*. Those who had made of their lives a project of holiness were thrown into the most unprecedented profanity; the lucky ones died first, though a Hasid would never have said so. What a Hasid would have said we can now know from this book. Some of Mrs. Eliach's material is astonishing. The Sochaczewer *rebbe*'s blessing of life came true for a Hasid as he passed Dr. Mengele. The number they burned into the young man's arm was 145053, which adds up to 18, the numerical value of the Hebrew word for life. The Hasid looked at his wrist and took hope in hell.

Hope was the supreme Hasidic emotion; a powerful *rebbe* of the nineteenth century, an eerie man and a great writer, had declared that according to Jewish law "it is forbidden to despair." It proved to be a perdurable teaching. But it was not only this feeling, and a fortifying talent for mystical meanings, that the Hasidim of Poland took with them into the ghettos and the camps; they took the law, too. Anybody who doubts that the Jews did not resist the Nazis, who has fallen for the slander about sheep to slaughter, should read this book. The Jews, almost all of them, were killed, it is true; but the killing of the Jews was only the last Nazi torment, and maybe the least. The Nazis came to Eastern Europe first to stop the Jews from being human, and then to exterminate them. At the former, they failed. The Jews stayed human. They even stayed Jewish. In the shadow of the crematorium they kept the law. The Bluzhover *rebbe*, Rabbi Israel Spira, who lives now in Brooklyn, told Mrs. Eliach this tale of a "children's *Aktion*" in Galicia:

> Suddenly, just next to us, I heard the voice of a woman. "Jews, have mercy upon me and give me a knife." In front of us was standing a woman, pale as a sheet. Only her eyes were burning with a strange fire. I thought that she wanted to commit suicide. I looked around, and since I saw no Germans in sight, I said to her, "Why are you in such a rush to [die]? We will get there sooner or later. What difference can one day make?"
>
> "Dog, what did you say to the woman?" A tall young German who appeared from nowhere demanded an answer, while swinging his rubber truncheon above my head. "The woman asked for a knife. I explained to her that we Jews are not permitted to take our lives. For our lives are entrusted in the hands of God." I hastily added, "And I hope that you, too, will spare our lives." The German did not respond to my words. He turned to the woman and demanded an explanation from her. She answered curtly, "I asked for a knife."
>
> As she was talking, she kept examining the German with her feverish eyes. Suddenly her eyes stopped wandering. Her gaze was fixed on the top pocket of the German's uniform. The shape of a knife was clearly visible through the pocket. "Give me that pocket knife!" she ordered the German in a commanding voice. The German, taken by surprise, handed the knife to the woman.
>
> She bent down and picked up something. Only then did I notice a bundle of rags on the ground near the sawdust. She unwrapped the bundle. Amidst the rags on a snow-white pillow was a newborn baby, asleep. With a steady hand she opened the pocket knife and circumcised the baby. In a clear, intense voice she recited the blessing

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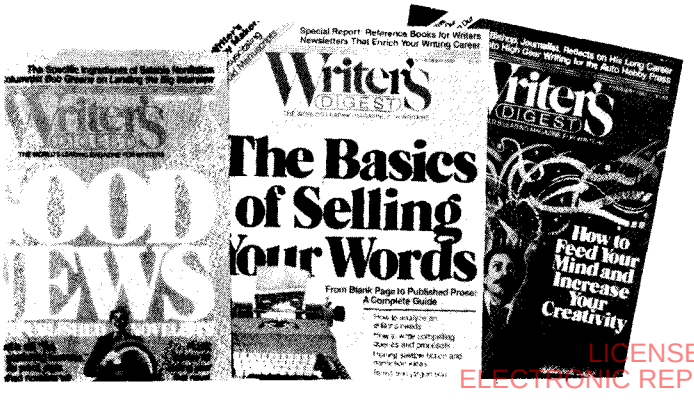
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of a circumcision. "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by thy commandments and has commanded us to perform the circumcision."

She straightened her back, looked up to the heavens, and said, "God of the Universe, you have given me a healthy child. I am returning to you a kosher child." She walked over to the German, gave him back his blood-stained knife, and handed him her baby on his snow-white pillow.

Amidst a veil of tears, I said to myself that this mother's circumcision will probably shake the foundations of heaven and earth.

If it shook heaven and earth we cannot know. We can know that in the Janowska Road Camp this Jew believed it would. He must have been the happiest man of the unhappiest people on earth.

LEON WIESELTIER

BRIEF REVIEW

On the Black Hill by Bruce Chatwin

(Viking, 249 pp., $14.95)

Like the heroes of *On the Black Hill*, twin brothers who devote eighty years to each other and to their Radnorshire farm, Bruce Chatwin is a curious anachronism. Deliberately, Benjamin and Lewis turn away from the modern age, hoping to shield themselves from the ugliness that hovers outside the four gates of "The Vision." Deliberately, Chatwin has shunned the tortured preoccupations of modern novelists, writing instead about the sturdy, simple folk—sheep farmers, millers, coffin makers, and sawyers—who, in rapidly dwindling numbers, still inhabit isolated pockets on the Welsh Border. *On the Black Hill* is both a celebration of these lives and a cause for celebration, a novel that has dusted off and retouched the pastoral tradition of English letters.

Critics have compared *On the Black Hill* to the novels of Thomas Hardy. Certainly the elemental passions are here, erupting in often eerie ways: in murder, incest, and a family feud that leads to a barn-burning and ritual slayings of calves and dogs. But Chatwin has none of Hardy's brooding intensity, and his characters—with the possible exception of the twins' mother, a missionary's daughter who marries a Welsh farmer and who surreptitiously reads *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, along with Euripides, Shakespeare, and Zola—lack the self-consciousness of a Jude Fawley or Eustacia Vye. This is a novel about people who grow odd with the passage of time and the scars of loneliness, not about people who are tormented by a restless psyche or a capricious Fate.

The twins are in fact charmingly free of inchoate longings. They are earthy, tenderhearted men who can no more imagine life away from "The Vision" than they can life apart from each other. Lewis pauses in the cowshed one day as he is pitching hay, and in a rare confessional moment tells Lotte Zons, a refugee from World War II Vienna who takes the two old brothers under her wing, " 'I was the strong one, and him was a poor mimmockin' thing. But him was always the smarter. . . . Sometimes, I lie awake and wonder what'd happen if him weren't here. If him'd gone off . . . was dead even. Then I'd have had my own life, like? Had kids?' " The moment passes. Lewis has long since resigned himself to his "marriage" to Benjamin, and a life without women or children. (Benjamin, for his part, has always been terrified of women, and is given to fits of jealousy when Lewis seeks out female companionship.) From the age of five, when Benjamin is stung by a wasp, and Lewis draws the pain from him, they have known that they are not two people, but one. They adore their mother; when she dies, they live for her memory, sleeping side by side in their parents' bed, on sheets of worn linen in a room that smells of lavender. Benjamin pours the tea and Lewis cuts the loaf.

With fondness and humor Chatwin captures every quirk of his characters' personalities, and all of the meager trappings of their lives. In unadorned descriptive prose he blends the mundane and the mystical, to startling effect. As young boys the twins are left alone one evening and told by their parents to look after their ailing grandfather:

> The old man hobbled across the kitchen and went outside. There was a high windy sky, and the mares'-tails seemed to dance with the larches. He was wearing his wedding-best—a frock coat and trousers, and shiny patent leather pumps. A red handkerchief, knotted round his neck, made him young again—and he carried the fiddle and bow.
>
> The twins peeped round the curtains.
>
> 'He's got to go back to bed,' Lewis whispered.
>
> 'Quiet!' hissed Benjamin. 'He's going to play.'
>
> A harsh croak burst from the ancient instrument. But the second note was sweeter, and the successive notes were sweeter still. His head was up. His chin stuck truculently out over the sound-box; and his feet shuffled over the flagstones in perfect time.
>
> Then he coughed and the music stopped. One tread at a time, he heaved himself up the stairs. He coughed again, and again, and after that there was silence.

Bruce Chatwin examines this remote world inhabited by several generations of eccentrics in much the same way he examined southern Argentina in his travel book, *In Patagonia*—as both artist and anthropologist. In a backdrop to his lyrical country portraits, he shows how the twentieth century, from the drone of war planes overhead to the "electronic warbling" of Space Invaders in the local bar, has encroached on every life, even the most insistently old-fashioned. And he is no more judgmental about contemporary ways than he is sentimental about the receding past. He is, rather, shrewdly observant about the peculiar forms that progress takes, just as he is about the resilience of his two unworldly heroes. In their seventies Benjamin and Lewis befriend a huge, red-bearded Afrikaner known as Theo the Tent, who has abandoned Buddhism and the commune down the road and lives alone in a yurt. Theo helps the brothers out on the farm, but he refuses to drive a tractor, and makes a scene whenever an animal is sent to slaughter. "His opinion of the twentieth century made Benjamin feel quite modern."

DOROTHY WICKENDEN

CORRECTION:

In John Updike's poem, "Two Hoppers" (TNR, January 31, 1983), "breath" was unfortunately printed for "breathe" in these lines:

> We have been here before. The slanting light,
> the woman alone and held amid the planes
> of paint by some mysterious witness we're
> invited to breathe beside . . .

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Hog Heaven

THE REDSKINS WON. Like everyone else I had planned to watch the game and drink beer with friends. But at the last minute I stiffened and attempted some work instead. No way. About halfway through the third quarter I gave in, turned on the office TV, and cheered and shook my fists with the rest of the city as John Riggins scored the winning touchdown. After the game an ecstatic crowd gathered nearby, and a senior colleague stopped in to suggest, somewhat mischievously, that we take a closer look. Walter Lippmann never faced such distractions, but what the hell. We plunged into the crowd. "This may be an opportunity for intimacy," explained my colleague, "or for a pogrom." We landed in the midst of several hundred fans who packed the intersection of 19th and M Streets, screaming slogans like "How 'bout them Skins!" "Yeah, Hogs!" (Hogs being the Redskins' offensive linemen), and the obligatory "We're number one!" Any gathering that could provoke so many women to don form-fitting T-shirts which asked "How 'bout them HOGS?" seemed worth investigating. In the excitement I recalled the emotions I used to get from playing high school football and watching college basketball—feelings of power, sexual energy, and community. As a retired jock and lapsed sports fan I missed the emotion of victory celebrations, and envied the revelers. But in remembering the raw excitement, I also remembered the letdown that often followed, the anxious aimlessness. We won, but now what do we do? Some of the fans enacted the Redskin victory dance. That ritual calls for a circle of six or seven people to crouch, swing their arms, count, and leap into the air to slap hands. If you think this looks silly in an end zone, try watching it on M Street.

AS THE HORNS blared and the fans whooped, we walked to Georgetown. My colleague mentioned the *Lumpenballen* held during the '20s and the '30s in Germany, where, for several days at a time, society suspended conventional morality, and artists and workers spent themselves, and their anger, in a riotous party. At the corner of M and Wisconsin, a thick crowd gathered. My colleague lost interest and fled to a jazz bar. I went back to the office, then changed my mind and returned with a pen and pad. By the time I arrived, the excitement had erupted into a mock riot. Redskin Fever was manifesting itself in hurled bottles, exploding fireworks, and other acts of minor vandalism. Helmeted police with riot sticks now stood guard, a streetlight was shattered, glass carpeted the streets, and a battered taxi had been sacrificed to the crowd. I asked the woman next to me what had happened. "The Redskins won," she giggled. Not everyone can score the winning touchdown, but almost everyone could get away with throwing a bottle on M Street Sunday night, and the defiance of authority provided each with a moment of small bravado. Someone managed to open a fire hydrant, which had the unintended effect of sweeping away the broken glass. "Man, this won't happen again for decades!" one man exclaimed. A youth of 16 was attempting to tear down a "Don't Walk" sign. I asked him why. The question startled him. Clearly he hadn't given it much thought. "Uh, I don't know," he answered. "What are you, a reporter or something?"

AS EVERYONE SAYS, the game brought people together. It offered something to talk about other than Pershing IIs and the Social Security compromise—a welcome change. Washingtonians huddled together in their living rooms and the suddenly deserted streets echoed with cheers, chorus-like, when the ball bounced the Redskins' way. The President offered to change his name from Reagan to Riggins. And the next day, members of Congress hailed the Redskins from the House floor. The capital, often accused of lacking communal spirit, blushed with civic pride. Redskin fans "are the greatest in the world," proclaimed jubilant owner Jack Kent Cooke. Drunken crowds are a special sort of community. "I'm a prejudiced son-of-a-bitch," one smashed celebrant informed me. "I hate blacks and chinks and spics and every damn thing. But tonight I've shaken hands with every damn one of them. It's great!" I came upon a well-dressed young woman shrieking and pointing at a startled youth being held by a cop. She said that he had grabbed her necklace. The police found the necklace amidst the broken glass. She continued to berate the captive. The woman's decision to press charges drew the vulgar taunts of the crowd. She answered them in kind. Several minutes later, with the youth cuffed, she returned to her fun, hugging her boyfriend and screaming, "Whooo! We're number one!"

THROUGH IT ALL, the cops remained calm, even bored. Policing was mostly limited to pulling people off the street lights they were attempting to drag down, and removing them from the fire trucks and other vehicles that happened to venture near. The celebrants jumped on top of trapped cars and danced dents into rooftops, hoods, and trunks. At least one trapped driver decided to join them. The revelers handed him a beer. Crowd control is a bit like fighting forest fires. You let the flames burn and try to contain the damage. "You just got to let them party out," explained one officer. But an occasional officer was less amused. Tapping his nightstick nervously one grumbled, "I'm talking some major league space cadets here, man. There are some fucked-up people out there." With that, he jumped forward and nabbed an unruly fan, flinging him against the wall, and pressing his nightstick across his captive's chest. "You like to shove?" he inquired. "I'll show you some shoving." He whisked his bewildered quarry across the street, frisked him, and loaded him into a waiting wagon. "PIG!" chanted the crowd. Pigs are out. Hogs are in.

SO THE SEASON that started with a strike ended with a happening. By 3 a.m., the crowd had thinned, and cops began thinning it further. "Okay, people, the party's over in Georgetown," bellowed one officer. He got a slap on the back from a straggling reveler, who said, "Good night. Hey, you did a great job," as if congratulating the chaperone at the junior high prom. The red lights of the squad cars swept across the broken glass, tires crunched down M Street, and a few last whooping fans and bottles exploding were heard in the distance. A man camped in a nearby doorway, dirty and ragged, watched us all go home. His face betrayed little reaction to the commotion around him. He looked neither angry nor excited nor surprised—only a bit weary. This wasn't the first time a crowd had crashed through his bedroom.

J. D.

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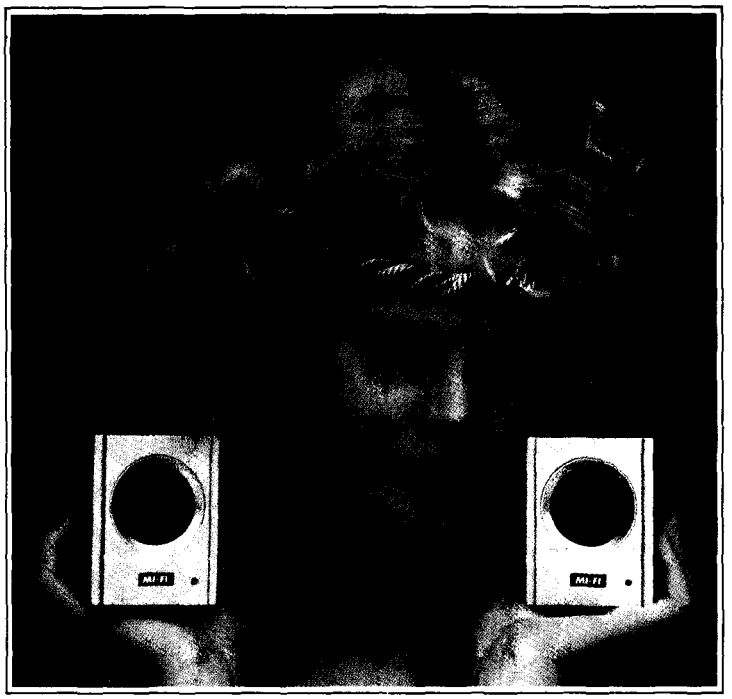

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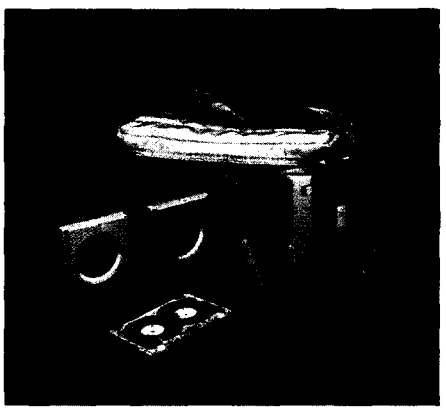

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